

TITLE 27 - THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR

CHAPTER 1 - RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR

SUBCHAPTER 1A - ORGANIZATION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR

SECTION .0100 - FUNCTIONS

27 NCAC 01A .0101 PURPOSE

The North Carolina State Bar shall foster the following purposes, namely:

- (1) to cultivate and advance the science of jurisprudence;
- (2) to promote reform in the law and in judicial procedure;
- (3) to facilitate the administration of justice;
- (4) to uphold and elevate the standards of honor, integrity and courtesy in the legal profession;
- (5) to encourage higher and better education for membership in the profession;
- (6) to promote a spirit of cordiality and unity among the members of the Bar;
- (7) to perform all duties imposed by law.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 84-23;*
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01A .0102 DIVISION OF WORK

- (a) To facilitate the work for the accomplishment of the above enumerated purposes, the council may, from time to time, classify such work under appropriate sections and committees, either standing or special, of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (b) The council shall determine the number of members, composition, method of appointment or election, functions, powers and duties, structure, authority to act, and other matters relating to each committee.
- (c) Any committee may, at the discretion of the appointing or electing authority, be composed of council members or members of the North Carolina State Bar who are not members of the council or of lay persons or of any combination.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;*
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01A .0103 COOPERATION WITH LOCAL BAR ASSOCIATION COMMITTEES

The sections and committees so appointed may secure the cooperation of like sections and committees of the North Carolina Bar Association and all local bar associations of the state.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 84-23;*
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01A .0104 ORGANIZATION OF LOCAL BAR ASSOCIATIONS

The council shall encourage and foster the organization of local bar associations.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 84-23;*
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01A .0105 ANNUAL PROGRAM

The council shall provide a suitable program for each annual meeting of the North Carolina State Bar.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 84-23;*
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01A .0106 REPORTS MADE TO ANNUAL MEETING

The annual reports of the several committees and boards shall be delivered to the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar before the annual meeting.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.*

SECTION .0200 - MEMBERSHIP - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

27 NCAC 01A .0201 CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP

(a) Two Classes of Membership. Members of the North Carolina State Bar shall be divided into two classes: active members and inactive members.

(b) Active Member. The active members shall be all persons who have obtained licenses entitling them to practice law in North Carolina, including persons serving as justices or judges of any state or federal court in this state, unless classified as inactive members by the council. All active members must pay the annual membership fee.

(c) Inactive Members

(1) The inactive members shall include:

- (A) all persons who have been admitted to the practice of law in North Carolina but who the council has found are not engaged in the practice of law or holding themselves out as practicing attorneys and who do not occupy any public or private position in which they may be called upon to give legal advice or counsel or to examine the law or to pass upon the legal effect of any act, document, or law, and
- (B) those persons granted emeritus pro bono status by the council and allowed to represent indigent clients on a pro bono basis under the supervision of active members working for nonprofit corporations organized pursuant to Chapter 55A of the General Statutes of North Carolina for the sole purpose of rendering legal services to indigents.

(2) Inactive members of the North Carolina State Bar may not practice law, except as provided in this rule for persons granted emeritus pro bono status, and are exempt from payment of membership dues during the period in which they are inactive members. For purposes of the State Bar's membership records, the category of inactive members shall be further divided into the following subcategories:

- (A) Nonpracticing. This subcategory includes those members who are not engaged in the practice of law or holding themselves out as practicing attorneys and who hold positions unrelated to the practice of law, or practice law in other jurisdictions.
- (B) Retired. This subcategory includes those members who are retired from the practice of law and who no longer hold themselves out as practicing attorneys. A retired member must hold himself or herself out as a "Retired Member of the North Carolina State Bar" or by some similar designation, provided such designation clearly indicates that the attorney is "retired."
- (C) Disability inactive status. This subcategory includes members who suffer from a mental or physical condition which significantly impairs the professional judgment, performance, or competence of an attorney, as determined by the courts, the council, or the Disciplinary Hearing Commission.
- (D) Disciplinary suspensions/disbarments. This subcategory includes those members who have been suspended from the practice of law or who have been disbarred by the courts, the council, or the Disciplinary Hearing Commission for one or more violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (E) Administrative suspensions. This subcategory includes those members who have been suspended from the practice of law, pursuant to the procedure set forth in Rule .0903 of subchapter 01D, for failure to fulfill the obligations of membership.
- (F) Emeritus pro bono status. This subcategory includes those members who are permitted by the council to represent indigent persons under the supervision of active members who are employed by nonprofit corporations duly authorized to provide legal services to such persons. This status may be withdrawn by the council for good cause shown pursuant to the procedure set forth in Rule .0903 of subchapter 01D.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-16; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 6, 2014; March 6, 2008.*

27 NCAC 01A .0202 REGISTER OF MEMBERS

(a) Initial Registration with State Bar. Every member shall register by completing and returning to the North Carolina State Bar a signed registration card containing the following information:

- (1) name and address;
- (2) date;
- (3) date passed examination to practice in North Carolina;
- (4) date and place sworn in as an attorney in North Carolina;
- (5) date and place of birth;
- (6) list of all other jurisdictions where the member has been admitted to the practice of law and date of admission;
- (7) whether suspended or disbarred from the practice of law in any jurisdiction or court, and if so, when and where, and when readmitted.

(b) Membership Records of State Bar. The secretary shall keep a permanent register for the enrollment of members of the North Carolina State Bar. In appropriate places therein entries shall be made showing the address of each member, date of registration and class of membership, date of transfer from one class to another, if any, date and period of suspension, if any, and such other useful data which the council may from time to time require.

(c) Updating Membership Information. Each year before July 1, every member shall provide or verify the member's current name, mailing address, and e-mail address.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-34;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. October 7, 2010; December 7, 1995;*

27 NCAC 01A .0203 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES; WHEN DUE

(a) Amount and Due Date

The annual membership fee shall be in the amount determined by the council as provided by law and shall be due and payable to the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar on January 1 of each year. The annual membership fee shall be delinquent if not paid by the last day of June of each year. For calendar year 2020 only, the annual membership fee shall be delinquent if not paid by August 31, 2020.

(b) Late Fee

Any attorney who fails to pay the entire annual membership fee in the amount determined by the council as provided by law and the annual Client Security Fund assessment approved by the North Carolina Supreme Court by the last day of June of each year shall also pay a late fee of \$30. For calendar year 2020 only, any attorney who fails to pay the entire annual membership fee in the amount determined by the council as provided by law and the annual Client Security Fund assessment approved by the North Carolina Supreme Court by August, 31, 2020, shall also pay a late fee of \$30.

(c) Waiver of All or Part of Dues

No part of the annual membership fee or Client Security Fund assessment shall be prorated or apportioned to fractional parts of the year, and no part of the membership fee or Client Security Fund assessment shall be waived or rebated for any reason with the following exceptions:

- (1) A person licensed to practice law in North Carolina for the first time by examination shall not be liable for dues or the Client Security Fund assessment during the year in which the person is admitted;
- (2) A person licensed to practice law in North Carolina serving in the armed forces, whether in a legal or nonlegal capacity, will be exempt from payment of dues and Client Security Fund assessment for any year in which the member is on active duty in the military service;
- (3) A person licensed to practice law in North Carolina who files a petition for inactive status on or before December 31 of a given year shall not be liable for the membership fee or the Client Security Fund assessment for the following year if the petition is granted. A petition shall be deemed timely if it is postmarked on or before December 31.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-34;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 7, 1996; December 7, 1995; September 7, 1995; September 25, 2020.*

27 NCAC 01A .0204 GOOD STANDING DEFINITION AND CERTIFICATES

(a) Definition. A lawyer who is an active member of the North Carolina State Bar and who is not subject to a pending administrative or disciplinary suspension or disbarment order or an order of suspension that has been stayed is in good standing with the North Carolina State Bar. An administrative or disciplinary suspension or disbarment order is "pending" if the order has been announced in open court by a state court of competent jurisdiction or by the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, or if the order has been entered by a state court of competent jurisdiction, by the Council or by the Disciplinary Hearing Commission but has not taken effect. "Good standing" makes no reference to delinquent membership obligations, prior discipline, or any disciplinary charges or grievances that may be pending.

(b) Certificate of Good Standing for Active Member. Upon application and payment of the prescribed fee, the Secretary of the North Carolina State Bar shall issue a certificate of good standing to any active member of the State Bar who is in good standing and who is current on all payments owed to the North Carolina State Bar. A certificate of good standing will not be issued unless the member pays any delinquency shown on the financial records of the North Carolina State Bar including outstanding judicial district bar dues. If the member contends that there is good cause for non-payment of some or all of the amount owed, the member may subsequently demonstrate good cause to the Administrative Committee pursuant to the procedure set forth in Rule .0903(e)(1) of Subchapter 01D of these rules. If the member shows good cause, the contested amount shall be refunded to the member.

(c) Certificate of Good Standing for Inactive Member. Upon application, the Secretary of the North Carolina State Bar shall issue a certificate of good standing to any inactive member of the State Bar who was in good standing at the time that the member was granted inactive status and who is not subject to any disciplinary order or pending disciplinary order. The certificate shall state that the member is inactive and is ineligible to practice law in North Carolina.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. March 8, 2012.

Codifier's Note: The content of Section .0300 Election and Succession of Officers was moved to Section .0400 September 24, 2015.

SECTION .0300 - PERMANENT RELINQUISHMENT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE STATE BAR

27 NCAC 01A .0301 EFFECT OF RELINQUISHMENT

(a) Order of Relinquishment. Pursuant to the authority of the council to resolve questions pertaining to membership status as specified in N.C. Gen. Stat. 84-23, the council may allow a member of the State Bar to relinquish his or her membership in the State Bar subject to the conditions set forth in this section. Upon the satisfaction of those conditions, the council may enter an order declaring that the individual is no longer a member of the State Bar and no longer has the privileges of membership set forth in N.C. Gen. Stat. 84-16 and in the rules of the State Bar.

(b) Requirements to Return to Practice of Law. If an individual who has been granted relinquishment of membership desires to return to the practice of law in the state of North Carolina, he or she must apply to the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners and satisfy all of the requirements to obtain a license to practice law in the state of North Carolina as if for the first time.

(c) Prohibition on Representations. Effective upon the date of the order of relinquishment, the former licensee is prohibited from representing that he or she is

- (1) a lawyer in North Carolina,
- (2) licensed to practice law in North Carolina,
- (3) able to provide legal services in North Carolina, or
- (4) a member of the North Carolina State Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. September 24, 2015.

27 NCAC 01A .0302 CONDITIONS FOR RELINQUISHMENT

A member of the State Bar may petition the council to enter an order of relinquishment. An order of relinquishment shall be granted if the petition demonstrates that the following conditions have been satisfied:

(a) Unresolved Complaints. No open, unresolved allegations of professional misconduct are pending against the petitioner in any jurisdiction.

- (b) No Financial Obligation to State Bar. The petitioner has paid all membership fees, Client Security Fund assessments, late fees, and costs assessed by the North Carolina State Bar or the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, and all fees, fines, and penalties owed to the Board of Continuing Legal Education.
- (c) Wind Down of Law Practice. The petitioner has completed the wind down of his or her law practice in compliance with the procedure for winding down the law practice of a suspended or disbarred lawyer set forth in paragraphs (a), (b), and (e) of Rule .0128 of Subchapter 1B and with any other condition on the wind down of a law practice imposed by state, federal, and administrative law. The petition must describe the wind down of the law practice with specificity.
- (d) Acknowledgment. The petitioner acknowledges the following: the State Bar's authority to take the actions described in Rule .0303 of this section; that the sole mechanism for regaining active membership status with the State Bar is to apply to the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners for admission and to satisfy all of the requirements to obtain a license to practice law in the state of North Carolina as if for the first time; and that he or she is not entitled to confidentiality under Rule .0133 of Subchapter 1B of any information relating to professional misconduct received by the State Bar after the date of the entry of the order of relinquishment.
- (e) Address. The petition includes a physical address at which the State Bar can communicate with the petitioner.
- (f) Notarized Petition. The petition is signed in the presence of a notary and notarized.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court September 24, 2015.

27 NCAC 01A .0303 ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT RECEIVED BY THE STATE BAR ON OR AFTER THE DATE OF RELINQUISHMENT

- (a) Post Relinquishment Action by State Bar. Relinquishment is not a bar to the initiation or investigation of allegations of professional misconduct and shall not prevent the State Bar from prosecuting a disciplinary action against the former licensee for any violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct that occurred prior to the date of the order of relinquishment.
- (b) Procedure for Investigation. Allegations of misconduct shall be investigated pursuant to the procedures set forth in Section .0100 of Subchapter 1B.
- (c) Release of Information from Investigation. Information from the investigation of allegations of misconduct shall be retained in the State Bar's records and may be released by the State Bar as required by law or as necessary to protect the interests of the public. Release may be made to, but is not limited to, the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners, any professional licensing authority, or any law enforcement or regulatory body investigating the former licensee.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. September 24, 2015.

27 NCAC 01A .0304 ELECTIONS

- (a) A president-elect, vice-president and secretary shall be elected annually by the council at an election to take place at the council meeting held during the annual meeting of the North Carolina State Bar. All elections will be conducted by secret ballot.
- (b) If there are more than two candidates for an office, then any candidate receiving a majority of the votes shall be elected. If no candidate receives a majority, then a run-off shall be held between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01A .0305 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- (a) There shall be a Nominating Committee appointed to nominate one or more candidates for each of the offices. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of the immediate past president and the five most recent living past presidents who are in good standing with the North Carolina State Bar. The Nominating Committee shall meet prior to the council meeting at which the election of officers will be held. The Nominating Committee shall submit its nominations in writing to the secretary at least 45 days prior to the election, and the secretary shall transmit the report by mail to the members of the council at least 30 days prior to the election.
- (b) At the council meeting at which elections are held, the floor shall be open for additional nominations for each office at the time of the election.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01A .0306 VACANCIES AND SUCCESSION

(a) If the office of president becomes vacant for any reason, including resignation, death, disqualification, or permanent inability, the president-elect shall become president for the unexpired term and the next term. If the office of the president-elect becomes vacant because the president-elect must assume the presidency under the foregoing provision of this section, then the vice-president shall become the president-elect for the unexpired term and at the end of the unexpired term to which the vice-president ascended the office will become vacant and an election held in accordance with Rule .0304 of this Section; if the office of president-elect becomes vacant for any other reason, the vice-president shall become the president-elect for the unexpired term following which said officer shall assume the presidency as if elected president-elect. If the office of vice-president or secretary becomes vacant for any reason, including resignation, death, disqualification, or permanent inability, or if the office of president or president-elect becomes vacant without an available successor under these provisions then the office will be filled by election by the council at a special meeting of the council with such notice as required by Rule .0602 of this Subchapter or at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the council.

(b) If the president is absent or unable to preside at any meeting of the North Carolina State Bar or the council, the president-elect shall preside, or if the president-elect is unavailable, then the vice-president shall preside. If none are available, then the council shall elect a member to preside during the meeting.

(c) If the president is absent from the state or for any reason is temporarily unable to perform the duties of office, the president-elect shall assume those duties until the president returns or becomes able to resume the duties. If the president-elect is unable to perform the duties, then the council may select one of its members to assume the duties for the period of inability.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01A .0307 REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

The council may, upon giving due notice and an opportunity to be heard, remove from office any officer found by the council to have a disability or to have engaged in misconduct including misconduct not related to the office.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-21; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.

SECTION .0400 - ELECTION, SUCCESSION, AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS

27 NCAC 01A .0401 OFFICERS

(a) The officers of the North Carolina State Bar and the council shall consist of a president, a president-elect, a vice-president, and an immediate past president. These officers shall be deemed members of the council in a respects.

(b) There shall be a secretary who shall also have the title of executive director. The secretary shall not be a member of the council.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. September 24, 2015.

27 NCAC 01A .0402 ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE

The president, president-elect, and vice-president need not be members of the council at the time of their election.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. September 24, 2015.

27 NCAC 01A .0403 TERM OF OFFICE

- (a) The term of each office shall be one year beginning at the conclusion of the annual meeting. Each officer will hold office until a successor is elected and qualified.
- (b) The president shall assume the office of immediate past president at the conclusion of the term as president. The president-elect shall assume the office of president at the conclusion of the annual meeting following the term as president-elect.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. September 24, 2015.

27 NCAC 01A .0404 ELECTIONS

- (a) A president-elect, vice-president and secretary shall be elected annually by the council at an election to take place at the council meeting held during the annual meeting of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (b) If there are more than two candidates for an office, then any candidate receiving a majority of the votes shall be elected. If no candidate receives a majority, then a run-off shall be held between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. September 24, 2015;
Amendments approved by the Supreme Court: May 21, 2025.

27 NCAC 01A .0405 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- (a) There shall be a Nominating Committee appointed to nominate one or more candidates for each of the offices. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of the immediate past president and the five most recent living past presidents who are in good standing with the North Carolina State Bar. The Nominating Committee shall meet prior to the council meeting at which the election of officers will be held. The Nominating Committee shall submit its nominations in writing to the secretary at least 45 days prior to the election, and the secretary shall transmit the report by mail to the members of the council at least 30 days prior to the election.
- (b) At the council meeting at which elections are held, the floor shall be open for additional nominations for each office at the time of the election.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. September 24, 2015.

27 NCAC 01A .0406 VACANCIES AND SUCCESSION

- (a) Succession Upon Mid-term Vacancy in Office. Officer vacancies shall be filled as follows:
- (1) A vacancy in the office of president shall be filled by the president-elect, who shall serve as president for the unexpired term and for the next term.
 - (2) A vacancy in the office of president-elect shall be filled by the vice-president, who shall serve as president-elect for the unexpired term. At the end of the unexpired term, the office of president-elect will become vacant and the council shall elect a president-elect in accordance with Rule .0404 of this subchapter. A former vice-president who served an unexpired term as president-elect pursuant to this subsection will be eligible to stand for election as president-elect.
 - (3) The council shall elect a person to fill the unexpired term created by any vacancy in the office of vice-president or secretary. The election shall occur at a special meeting of the council or at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the council.
 - (4) If there is a vacancy in the office of president or president-elect and there is no available successor under these provisions, the council shall elect a person to fill the unexpired term created by such vacancy. The election shall occur at a special meeting of the council or at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the council.
- (b) Temporary Inability to Preside at Meetings. If the president is absent or is otherwise unable to preside at any meeting of the North Carolina State Bar or the council, the president-elect shall preside. If the president-elect is absent or is otherwise

unable to preside, then the vice-president shall preside. If none of the president, president-elect, or vice-president are present and able to preside, then the council shall elect a member to preside during the meeting.

(c) **Temporary Inability to Perform Duties.** If the president is absent or is otherwise temporarily unable to perform the duties of office, the president-elect shall perform those duties until the president returns or becomes able to resume the duties. If the president-elect is absent or is otherwise temporarily unable to perform the duties of the president, then the council shall select one of its members to perform those duties for the period of the president's absence or inability.

(d) **Temporary Inability of Secretary to Perform Duties.** If the secretary is absent or is otherwise temporarily unable to perform the duties of office, the assistant director and director for management, finance, and communications shall perform those duties until the secretary returns or becomes able to resume the duties. If the assistant director and director for management, finance, and communications is absent or is otherwise unable to perform those duties, the counsel of the State Bar shall perform those duties until the secretary returns or becomes able to resume the duties. If neither the assistant director and director for management, finance, and communications nor the counsel are able to perform those duties, then the president may select a member of the State Bar staff to perform those duties for the period of the secretary's absence or inability. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the secretary may delegate any ministerial task to any employee of the North Carolina State Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 24, 2015; September 20, 2018; March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01A .0407 REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

The council may, upon giving due notice and an opportunity to be heard, remove from office any officer found by the council to have a disability or to have engaged in misconduct including misconduct not related to the office.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. September 24, 2015.

27 NCAC 01A .0408 COMPENSATION OF OFFICERS

The secretary shall receive a salary fixed by the council. All other officers shall serve without compensation except the per diem allowances fixed by statute for members of the council.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. September 24, 2015.

27 NCAC 01A .0409 PRESIDENT

The president shall preside over meetings of the North Carolina State Bar and the council. The president shall sign all resolutions and orders of the council in the capacity of president. The president shall execute, along with the secretary, all contracts ordered by the council. Pursuant to Rule .0412, the president is authorized to act in the name of the State Bar under emergent circumstances. The president will perform all other duties prescribed for the office by the council.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 24, 2015; September 25, 2019.

27 NCAC 01A .0410 PRESIDENT-ELECT, VICE-PRESIDENT, AND IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

The president-elect, vice-president, and immediate past president will perform all duties prescribed for the office by the council.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. September 24, 2015.

27 NCAC 01A .0411 SECRETARY

The secretary shall attend all meetings of the council and of the North Carolina State Bar, and shall record the proceedings of all such meetings. The secretary shall, with the president, president-elect or vice-president, execute all contracts ordered by the council. He or she shall have custody of the seal of the North Carolina State Bar, and shall affix it to all documents executed on behalf of the council or certified as emanating from the council. The secretary shall take charge of all funds paid into the North Carolina State Bar and deposit them in some bank selected by the council; he or she shall cause books of accounts to be kept, which shall be the property of the North Carolina State Bar and which shall be open to the inspection of any officer, committee or member of the North Carolina State Bar during usual business hours. At each January meeting of the council, the secretary shall make a full report of receipts and disbursements since the previous annual report, together with a list of all outstanding obligations of the North Carolina State Bar. The books of accounts shall be audited as of December 31 of each year and the secretary shall publish same in the annual reports as referred to above. He or she shall perform such other duties as may be imposed upon him or her, and shall give bond for the faithful performance of his or her duties in an amount to be fixed by the council with surety to be approved by the council. The secretary may delegate any ministerial task to any employee of the North Carolina State Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 24, 2015; March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01A .0412 EMERGENCY AUTHORITY

When prompt action is required due to emergent circumstances and it is not practicable or reasonable to assemble a quorum of the council, the president, in consultation with the officers and counsel, is authorized to act in the name of the State Bar to the extent necessary to carry out the functions of the State Bar until the next meeting of the council. Action taken pursuant to this rule shall be presented to the council for ratification at the next council meeting.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. September 25, 2019.

SECTION .0500 – MEETINGS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR

27 NCAC 01A .0501 ANNUAL MEETINGS

The annual meeting of the North Carolina State Bar shall be held at such time and place within the state of North Carolina as the council may determine.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: April 5, 2018.

27 NCAC 01A .0502 SPECIAL MEETINGS

- (a) A special meeting of the North Carolina State Bar may be called to address specific subjects as follows:
- (1) upon direction of the council; or
 - (2) upon delivery to the secretary of a written request by no fewer than 25% of the active members of the North Carolina State Bar setting forth the subject(s) to be addressed.
- (b) At a special meeting, only subjects specified in the notice shall be addressed.
- (c) Any special meeting of the North Carolina State Bar will be held at such time and place within the state of North Carolina as the council or president may determine.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-33;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: April 5, 2018.

27 NCAC 01A .0503 NOTICE OF MEETINGS

(a) Notice of any meeting of the North Carolina State Bar shall be given by the secretary by posting a notice at the State Bar headquarters and on the State Bar website or as otherwise directed by the council. Notice shall also be provided as required by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.12 and by any other statutory provision regulating notice of public meetings of agencies of the state.

(b) Notice of the annual meeting will be given at least 30 days before the meeting. Notice of any special meeting will be given at least 48 hours before the meeting or as otherwise required by law.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-33;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: April 5, 2018.*

27 NCAC 01A .0504 QUORUM

At any annual or special meetings of the North Carolina State Bar those active members of the North Carolina State Bar present shall constitute a quorum. There shall be no voting by proxy or by absentee ballot.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-33;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: April 5, 2018.*

27 NCAC 01A .0505 PARLIAMENTARY RULES

Proceedings at any meeting of the North Carolina State Bar shall be governed by Roberts' Rules of Order.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

SECTION .0600 – MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

27 NCAC 01A .0601 REGULAR MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the council shall be held each year in January, April, and July, at such times and places as the council may determine. A regular meeting of the council shall also be held each year in conjunction with the annual meeting of the North Carolina State Bar at the location of the annual meeting. Any regular meeting may be adjourned from time to time as a majority of members of the council present may determine.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: June 1, 1995; April 5, 2018.*

27 NCAC 01A .0602 SPECIAL AND EMERGENCY MEETINGS

(a) A special meeting of the council may be called to address specified subjects as follows:

- (1) by the president in his or her discretion; or
- (2) by a written request, delivered to the secretary, by eight councilors setting forth the subject(s) to be addressed at the meeting. The secretary will schedule a special meeting to be held no more than 30 days after receipt of the request.

(b) An emergency meeting of the council may be called by the president to address circumstances that require immediate consideration by the council.

(c) In the event of incapacity or recusal of the president, the president elect or the vice president may call a special or emergency meeting. In the event of incapacity or recusal of the president elect or the vice president, the immediate past president or secretary may call a special or emergency meeting. In the event of incapacity or recusal of all officers, any member of the council who has served at least two terms may call a special or emergency meeting.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: April 5, 2018.*

27 NCAC 01A .0603 NOTICE OF MEETINGS

(a) Notice of any regular meeting of the council will be given by the secretary by posting a notice at the State Bar headquarters and on the State Bar website or as otherwise directed by the council. Notice of any regular meeting will also be provided as required by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.12 and any other statutory provision regulating notice of public meetings

of agencies of the state. Unless otherwise required by law, the secretary will issue notice of any regular meeting of the council at least 30 days before the meeting.

(b) The secretary will issue notice of any special meeting of the council at least 48 hours before the meeting, or as otherwise required by law. Notices of any special meeting will be sent to each councilor by email, or other electronic means intended to be individually received by each councilor, to the most recent address of record provided to the State Bar by each councilor for such communications. Notice will be given to any councilor who has not provided an email address, or other electronic means to receive notices, by regular mail. Notice may be sent, but is not required to be sent, by any means authorized for service under the Rules of Civil Procedure.

(c) The secretary will issue reasonable notice of any emergency meeting in a manner consistent with the purpose of the meeting. Such notice may be given through any appropriate means by which each councilor may receive notice on an expedited basis, including telephone, email, or other electronic means.

(d) The notice for any council meeting shall set forth the day, hour, and location of the meeting.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: April 5, 2018.

27 NCAC 01A .0604 QUORUM

At a meeting of the council the presence of 10 councilors shall constitute a quorum. There shall be no voting by proxy or by absentee ballot.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: April 5, 2018.

27 NCAC 01A .0605 MANNER OF MEETING OF COUNCIL

The council will assemble at the time and place provided in the meeting notice. Attendance at a special or emergency council meeting may be by electronic means such as audio or video conferencing. Attendance at a regular council meeting by electronic means may be authorized for an individual councilor in the discretion of the president.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court April 5, 2018.

27 NCAC 01A .0606 PARLIAMENTARY RULES

Proceedings at any meeting of the council shall be governed by Roberts' Rules of Order.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court April 5, 2018.

SECTION .0700 – STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

27 NCAC 01A .0701 STANDING COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

(a) Standing Committees. Promptly after his or her election, the president shall appoint members to the standing committees identified below to serve for one year beginning January 1 of the year succeeding his or her election. Members of the committees need not be councilors, except to the extent expressly required by these rules, and may include non-lawyers. Unless otherwise directed by resolution of the council, all members of a standing committee, whether councilors or non-councilors, shall be entitled to vote as members of the standing committee or any subcommittee or panel thereof.

- (1) Executive Committee. It shall be the duty of the Executive Committee to receive reports and recommendations from standing committees, boards, and special committees; to nominate individuals for appointments made by the council; to make long range plans for the State Bar; and to perform such other duties and consider such other matters as the council or the president may designate.
- (2) Ethics Committee. It shall be the duty of the Ethics Committee to study the rules of professional responsibility currently in effect; to make recommendations to the council for such amendments to the rules as the committee deems necessary or appropriate; to study and respond to questions that arise concerning the meaning and application of the rules of professional conduct; to issue opinions in response to questions

of legal ethics in accordance with the provisions of Section .0100 of Subchapter 1D of these rules; to consider issues concerning the regulation of lawyers' trust accounts; and to perform such other duties and consider such other matters as the council or the president may designate.

- (3) Grievance Committee. It shall be the duty of the Grievance Committee to exercise the disciplinary and disability functions and responsibilities set forth in Section .0100 of Subchapter 1B of these rules and to make recommendations to the council for such amendments to that section as the committee deems necessary or appropriate. The Grievance Committee shall sit in subcommittees as assigned by the president. Each subcommittee shall have at least ten members. Two members of each subcommittee shall be nonlawyers, one member may be a lawyer who is not a member of the council, and the remaining members of each subcommittee shall be councilors of the North Carolina State Bar. A quorum of a subcommittee shall be five members serving at a particular time. One subcommittee shall oversee the Attorney Client Assistance Program. It shall be the duty of the Attorney Client Assistance subcommittee to develop and oversee policies and programs to help clients and lawyers resolve difficulties or disputes, including fee disputes, using means other than the formal grievance or civil litigation processes; and to perform such other duties and consider such other matters as the council or the president may designate. Each subcommittee shall exercise the powers and discharge the duties of the Grievance Committee with respect to the grievances, fee disputes, and other matters referred to it by the chairperson of the Grievance Committee. Each subcommittee member shall be furnished a brief description of all matters referred to other subcommittees (and such other available information as he or she may request) and be given a reasonable opportunity to provide comments to such other subcommittees. Each subcommittee's decision respecting the grievances, fee disputes, and other matters assigned to it will be deemed final action of the Grievance Committee, unless the full committee at its next meeting, by a majority vote of those present, elects to review a subcommittee decision and upon further consideration decides to reverse or modify that decision. There will be no other right of appeal to the committee as a whole or to another subcommittee. The president shall designate a vice-chairperson to preside over, and oversee the functions of each subcommittee. The vice-chairpersons shall have such other powers as may be delegated to them by the chairperson of the Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee shall perform such other duties and consider such other matters as the council or the president may designate.
- (4) Authorized Practice Committee. It shall be the duty of the Authorized Practice Committee to respond to or investigate inquiries and complaints about conduct that may constitute the unauthorized practice of law in accordance with the provisions of Section .0200 of Subchapter 1D of these rules; to study and advise the council on the appropriate and lawful use and regulation of legal assistants, paralegals and other lay persons in connection with the provision of law-related services; to study and advise the council on the regulation of professional organizations; and to perform such other duties and consider such other matters as the council or the president may designate.
- (5) Administrative Committee. It shall be the duty of the Administrative Committee to study and make recommendations on policies concerning the administration of the State Bar, including the administration of the State Bar's facilities, automation, personnel, retirement plan, and district bars; to oversee the membership functions of the State Bar, including the collection of dues, the suspension of members for failure to pay dues and other fees, and the transfer of members to active or inactive status in accordance with the provisions of Sections .0900 and .1000 of Subchapter 1D of these rules; and to perform such other duties and consider such other matters as the council or the president may designate.
- (6) Legal Assistance for Military Personnel (LAMP) Committee. It shall be the duty of the LAMP Committee to serve as liaison for lawyers in the military service in this State; to improve legal services to military personnel and dependents stationed in this State; and to perform such other duties and consider such other matters as the council or the president may designate.
- (7) Finance and Audit Committee. It shall be the duty of the Finance and Audit Committee to superintend annually the preparation of the State Bar's operational budget and to make recommendations to the Executive Committee concerning that budget and the budgets for the boards listed in subsection (b) below; to make recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding the State Bar's financial policies; to examine the financial records of the State Bar at each regular meeting of the council and report its findings to the Executive Committee; to recommend to the Executive Committee annually the retention of an independent auditor; to direct the work of the independent auditor in accordance with the policies and procedures adopted by the council and the state auditor; and to review the results of the annual audit and make recommendations concerning the audit to the Executive Committee.

- (8) Communications Committee. It shall be the duty of the Communications Committee to develop and coordinate official North Carolina State Bar communications to its membership and to third parties, including the use of printed publications, emerging technology, and social media.
 - (9) Access to Justice Committee. It shall be the duty of the Access to Justice Committee to study and to recommend to the council programs and initiatives that respond to the profession's responsibility, set forth in the Preamble to the Rules of Professional Conduct, "to ensure equal access to our system of justice for all those who, because of economic or social barriers, cannot afford or secure adequate legal counsel." 27 N.C. Admin. Code 2.0.1, Preamble.
- (b) Boards. The council of the State Bar shall make appointments to the following boards upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee. The boards are constituents of the North Carolina State Bar and, as standing committees of the State Bar, are subject to the authority of the council.
- (1) Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Board of Trustees. The IOLTA Board shall be constituted in accordance with and shall carry out the provisions of the Plan for Disposition of Funds Received by the North Carolina State Bar from Interest on Trust Accounts set forth in Section .1300 of subchapter 1D of these rules.
 - (2) Board of Legal Specialization. The Board of Legal Specialization shall be constituted in accordance with and shall carry out the provisions of the Plan of Legal Specialization set forth in Section .1700 of subchapter 1D of these rules.
 - (3) Client Security Fund Board of Trustees. The Client Security Fund Board of Trustees shall be constituted in accordance with and shall carry out the provisions of the Rules Governing the Administration of the Client Security Fund of the North Carolina State Bar set forth in Section .1400 of subchapter 1D of these rules.
 - (4) Board of Continuing Legal Education (CLE). The Board of Continuing Legal Education shall be constituted in accordance with and shall carry out the provisions of the Continuing Legal Education Rules and Regulations of the North Carolina State Bar set forth in Sections .1500 and .1600 of subchapter 1D of these rules.
 - (5) Lawyer Assistance Program Board. The Lawyer Assistance Program Board shall be constituted in accordance with and shall carry out the provisions of the Rules Governing the Lawyer Assistance Program of the North Carolina State Bar set forth in Section .0600 of subchapter 1D of these rules.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: June 12, 1996; February 3, 2000; October 6, 2004;
 November 16, 2006; March 8, 2007; March 11, 2010; October 7, 2010; September 22, 2016; April 5,
 2018; September 25, 2019;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court March 1, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's
 minutes March 20, 2024.

SECTION .0800 - ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF STATE BAR COUNCILORS

27 NCAC 01A .0801 PURPOSE

The purpose of these Rules is to promulgate fair, open, and uniform procedures to elect and appoint North Carolina State Bar councilors in all judicial district bars. These Rules should encourage a broader and more diverse participation and representation of all attorneys in the election and appointment of councilors.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01A .0802 ELECTION - WHEN HELD; NOTICE; NOMINATIONS

- (a) Every judicial district bar, in any calendar year at the end of which the term of one or more of its councilors will expire, shall fill said vacancy or vacancies at an election to be held during that year.
- (b) The officers of the district bar shall fix the time and place of such election and shall give to each active member (as defined in G.S. 84-16) of the district bar a written notice thereof. Notice may be sent by email or United States Mail to the email or mailing address on file with the North Carolina State Bar. Such notice shall be sent at least 30 days prior to the date of the election.

- (c) The district bar shall submit its written notice by regular mail or email of the election to the North Carolina State Bar, at least six weeks before the date of the election.
- (d) The North Carolina State Bar will, at its expense, email these notices to the lawyers in the district bar holding the election using the lawyers' email address on record with the North Carolina State Bar. If a lawyer does not have an email address on record, the notice shall be sent by regular mail to the lawyer's mailing address on record with the North Carolina State Bar.
- (e) The notice shall state the date, time and place of the election, give the number of vacancies to be filled, identify how and to whom nominations may be made before the election, and advise that all elections must be by a majority of the votes cast. If the election will be held at a meeting of the bar, the notice will also advise that additional nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting itself. In judicial districts that permit elections by mail or early voting, the notice to members shall advise that nominations may be made in writing directed to the president of the district bar and received prior to a date set out in the notice. Sufficient notice shall be provided to permit nominations received from district bar members to be included on the printed ballots.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-18; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: November 5, 1999; August 27, 2013; December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01A .0803 ELECTION - VOTING PROCEDURES

- (a) All nominations made either before or at the meeting shall be voted on by secret ballot.
- (b) Cumulative voting shall not be permitted.
- (c) Nominees receiving a majority of the votes cast shall be declared elected.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-18; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. November 5, 1999.

27 NCAC 01A .0804 PROCEDURES GOVERNING ELECTIONS BY MAIL

- (a) Judicial district bars may adopt bylaws permitting elections by mail, in accordance with procedures approved by the N.C. State Bar Council and as set out in this Section.
- (b) Only active members of the judicial district bar may participate in elections conducted by mail.
- (c) In districts which permit elections by mail, the notice sent to members referred to in Rule .0802(e) of this Subchapter shall advise that the election will be held by mail.
- (d) The judicial district bar shall mail a ballot to each active member of the judicial district bar at the member's address of record on file with the North Carolina State Bar. The ballot shall be accompanied by written instructions and shall state when and where the ballot should be returned.
- (e) Each ballot shall be sequentially numbered with a red identifying numeral in the upper right hand corner of the ballot. The judicial district bar shall maintain appropriate records respecting how many ballots were mailed to prospective voters in each election, as well as how many ballots are returned.
- (f) Only original ballots will be accepted. No photocopied or faxed ballots will be accepted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-18; 84-23;
Eff. November 5, 1999;
Amended Eff. August 23, 2012.

27 NCAC 01A .0805 PROCEDURES GOVERNING ELECTIONS BY ELECTRONIC VOTE

- (a) Judicial district bars may adopt bylaws permitting elections by electronic vote in accordance with procedures approved by the N.C. State Bar Council and as set out in this Section.
- (b) Only active members of the judicial district bar may participate in elections conducted by electronic vote.
- (c) In districts which permit elections by electronic vote, the notice sent to members referred to in Rule .0802(e) of this Subchapter shall advise that the election will be held by electronic vote and shall identify how and to whom nominations may be made before the election. The notice shall explain when the ballot will be available, how to access the ballot, and the method for voting online. The notice shall also list locations where computers will be available for active members to access the online ballot in the event they do not have personal online access.
- (d) Write-in candidates shall be permitted and the instructions shall so state.

(e) Online balloting procedures must ensure that only one vote is cast per active member of the judicial district bar and that all members have access to a ballot.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-18;
Eff. August 23, 2012.

27 NCAC 01A .0806 PROCEDURES GOVERNING EARLY VOTING

(a) Judicial district bars may adopt bylaws permitting early voting for up to 10 business days prior to a councilor election, in accordance with procedures approved by the NC State Bar Council and as set out in this subchapter.

(b) Only active members of the judicial district bar may participate in early voting.

(c) In districts that permit early voting, the notice sent to members referred to in Rule .0802(e) of this subchapter shall advise that early voting will be permitted, and shall identify the locations, dates, and hours for early voting. The notice shall also advise that nominations may be made in writing directed to the president of the district bar and received prior to a date set out in the notice. Sufficient notice shall be provided to permit nominations received from district bar members to be included on the printed ballots.

(d) The notice sent to members referred to in Rule .0802(e) of this subchapter shall be placed in the United States Mail, postage prepaid, at least 30 days prior to the first day of the early voting period.

(e) Write-in candidates shall be permitted during the early voting period and at the election, and the instructions shall so state.

(f) Early voting locations and hours must be reasonably accessible to all active members of the judicial district.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-18;
Adopted Eff. August 27, 2013.

27 NCAC 01A .0807 VACANCIES

The unexpired term of any councilor whose office has become vacant because of resignation, death, or any cause other than the expiration of a term, shall be filled within 90 days of the occurrence of the vacancy by an election conducted in the same manner as above provided.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-18; 84-23.
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. August 27, 2013; August 23, 2012; November 5, 1999.

SECTION .0900 - ORGANIZATION OF THE JUDICIAL DISTRICT BARS

27 NCAC 01A .0901 BYLAWS

(a) Each judicial district bar shall adopt bylaws for its governance subject to the approval of the council.

(b) Each judicial district bar shall submit its current bylaws to the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar for review by the council on or before June 1, 1996.

(c) Pending review by the council, any bylaws submitted to the secretary on behalf of a judicial district bar or which already exist in the files of the secretary shall be deemed official and authoritative.

(d) All amendments to the bylaws of any judicial district bar must be filed with the secretary within 30 days of adoption and shall have no force and effect until approved by the council.

(e) The secretary shall maintain an official record for each judicial district bar containing bylaws which have been approved by the council or for which approval is pending.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01A .0902 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE

If a judicial district bar elects to assess an annual membership fee from its active members pursuant to N.C.G.S. §84-18.1(b), the following procedures shall apply:

(a) Notice to State Bar. The judicial district bar shall notify the North Carolina State Bar of its election to assess an annual membership fee each year at least thirty days prior to mailing to its members the first invoice therefore, specifying the amount of the annual membership fee, the date after which payment will be delinquent, and the amount of any late fee for delinquent payment.

(b) Accounting to State Bar. No later than thirty days after the end of the judicial district bar's fiscal year, the judicial district bar shall provide the North Carolina State Bar with an accounting of the annual membership fees it collected during such judicial district bar's fiscal year.

(c) Delinquency Date. The date upon which the annual membership fee shall be delinquent if not paid shall be not later than ninety days after, and not sooner than thirty days after, the date of the first invoice for the annual membership fee. The delinquency date shall be stated on the invoice and the invoice shall advise each member that failure to pay the annual membership fee must be reported to the North Carolina State Bar and may result in suspension of the member's license to practice law.

(d) Late Fee. Each judicial district bar may impose, but shall not be required, to impose a late fee of any amount not to exceed fifteen dollars (\$15.00) for non-payment of the annual membership fee on or before the stated delinquency date.

(e) Members Subject to Assessment. Only those lawyers who are active members of a judicial district bar may be assessed an annual membership fee.

(f) Members Exempt from Assessment.

- (1) A person licensed to practice law in North Carolina for the first time by examination is not liable for judicial district bar membership fees during the year in which the person is admitted;
- (2) A person licensed to practice law in North Carolina serving in the United States Armed Forces, whether in a legal or nonlegal capacity, is exempt from judicial district bar membership fees for any year in which the member serves some portion thereof on full-time active duty in military service;
- (3) A lawyer who joins a judicial district bar after the beginning of its fiscal year is exempt from the obligation to pay the annual membership fee for that fiscal year only if the lawyer can demonstrate that he or she previously paid an annual membership fee to another judicial district bar with a fiscal year that runs conterminously, for a period of three (3) months or more, with the fiscal year of the lawyer's new judicial district bar.

(g) Hardship Waivers. A judicial district bar may not grant any waiver from the obligation to pay the judicial district bar's annual membership fee. A judicial district bar may waive the late fee upon a showing of good cause.

(h) Reporting Delinquent Members to State Bar. Three to six months after the delinquency date for the annual membership fee, the judicial district bar shall report to the North Carolina State Bar all of its members who have not paid the annual membership fee or any late fee.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-18.1; 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court December 20, 2000;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 6, 2008; April 10, 2014; March 16, 2017.

27 NCAC 01A .0903 FISCAL PERIOD

To avoid conflict with the assessment of the membership fees for the North Carolina State Bar, each judicial district bar that assesses a membership fee shall adopt a fiscal year that is not a calendar year. Any judicial district bar that assesses a mandatory membership fee for the first time after December 31, 2013, must adopt a fiscal year that begins July 1 and ends June 30.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-18.1; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. December 20, 2000;
Amended Eff. April 10, 2014.

SECTION .1000 - MODEL BYLAWS FOR USE BY JUDICIAL DISTRICT BARS

27 NCAC 01A .1001 NAME

The name of this District Bar shall be THE DISTRICT BAR OF THE _____ JUDICIAL DISTRICT, and shall be hereinafter referred to as the "District Bar".

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01A .1002 AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The District Bar is formed pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 84 to promote the purposes therein set forth and to comply with the duties and obligations therein or thereunder imposed upon the Bar of this judicial district.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.*

27 NCAC 01A .1003 MEMBERSHIP

The members of the District Bar shall consist of two classes: active and inactive.

- (1) Active members: The active members shall be all persons who, at the time of the adoption of these bylaws or any time thereafter:
 - (a) are active members in good standing with the North Carolina State Bar; and
 - (b) reside in the judicial district; or
 - (c) practice in the judicial district and elect to belong to the District Bar as provided in G.S. 84-16.
- (2) Inactive members: The inactive members shall be all persons, who, at the time of the adoption of these bylaws or at any time thereafter:
 - (a) have been granted voluntary inactive status by the North Carolina State Bar; and
 - (b) reside in the judicial district; and
 - (c) elect to participate, but not vote or hold office, in the District Bar by giving written notice to the Secretary of the District Bar.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.*

27 NCAC 01A .1004 OFFICERS

The officers of the District Bar shall be a President, a Vice President, and Secretary and/or Treasurer who shall be selected and shall serve for the terms set out herein.

- (1) President: The President serving at the time these bylaws are effective shall continue to serve for a term ending at the next annual meeting following the adoption or effective date of these bylaws. The President for the following term shall be the then current Vice President. Thereafter, the duly elected Vice President shall automatically succeed to the office of the President for a term of one, two, or three years.
- (2) Vice President: The Vice President serving at the time these bylaws are effective shall continue to serve for a term ending at the next annual meeting following the adoption or effective date of these bylaws, at which time said Vice President shall succeed to the office of the President. Thereafter, the Vice President shall be elected at the annual meeting as hereinafter provided for a term of one, two, or three years.
- (3) Secretary and/or Treasurer: The Secretary and/or the Treasurer serving at the time these bylaws are effective shall each continue to serve in their respective offices until the expiration of the term of that office or until successors are appointed by the President (or be elected by the active members of the District Bar), whichever occurs later. In all other years, the Secretary and/or Treasurer shall be appointed by the President (or be elected by the active members of the District Bar) to serve for a term of one, two, or three years.
- (4) Election: Before (or at) the annual meeting at which officers are to be elected, the Nominating Committee shall submit the names of its nominees for the office of Vice President to the Secretary. Nominations from the floor shall be permitted. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, the candidate with the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated and a run-off election shall immediately be held among the remaining candidates. This procedure shall be repeated until a candidate receives a majority of the votes.
- (5) Duties: The duties of the officers shall be those usual and customary for such officers, including such duties as may from time to time designated by resolutions of the District Bar, the North Carolina State Bar Council or the laws of the State of North Carolina.
- (6) Vacancies: If a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer occurs, the vacancy will be filled by the Board of Directors, if any, and if there is no Board of Directors, then by the vote of the active members at a special meeting of such members. The successor shall serve until the next annual meeting of the District Bar. If the office of the President becomes vacant, the Vice President shall succeed to the office of the President and the Board of Directors, if any, and if there is no Board of Directors, then by the vote of the active members at a special meeting of such members, will select a new Vice President, who shall serve until the next annual meeting.

- (7) Notification: Within 10 days following the annual meeting, or the filling of a vacancy in any office, the President shall notify the Executive Director of the North Carolina State Bar of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all officers of the District Bar.
- (8) Record of Bylaws: The President shall ensure that a current copy of these bylaws is filed with the office of the Senior Resident Superior Court Judge with the _____ Judicial District and with the Executive Director of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (9) Removal from Office: The District Bar, by a two-thirds vote of its active members present at a duly called meeting, may, after due notice and an opportunity to be heard, remove from office any officer who has engaged in conduct which renders the officer unfit to serve, or who has become disabled, or for other good cause. The office of any officer who, during his or her term of office ceases to be an active member of the North Carolina State Bar shall immediately be deemed vacant and shall be filled as provided in Item (6) of this Rule.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01A .1005 COUNCILOR

The district bar shall be represented in the State Bar council by one or more duly elected councilors, the number of councilors being determined pursuant to G.S. 84-17. Any councilor serving at the time of the adoption of these bylaws shall complete the term of office to which he or she was previously elected. Thereafter, elections shall be held as necessary. Nominations shall be made and the election held as provided in G.S. 84-18 and in Section .0800 et seq. of Subchapter 01A of the Rules of the North Carolina State Bar (27 NCAC 01A .0800 et seq.). If more than one council seat is to be filled, separate elections shall be held for each vacant seat. A vacancy in the office of councilor shall be filled as provided by 27 NCAC 01A .0804 of Subchapter 01A of the Rules of the North Carolina State Bar (27 NCAC 01A .0804).

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-18.1; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 7, 1996;
Amended Eff. November 5, 1999.

27 NCAC 01A .1006 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE

- (a) Each active member of the District Bar shall:
 - (1) Pay such annual membership fee, if any, as is prescribed by a majority vote of the active members of the District Bar present and voting at a duly called meeting of the District Bar, provided, however, that such fee may never exceed the amount of the annual membership fee currently imposed by the North Carolina State Bar. Each member shall pay the annual District Bar membership fee at the time and place set forth in the notice thereof mailed to the member by the Secretary-Treasurer; and
 - (2) Keep the Secretary-Treasurer notified of the member's current mailing address and telephone number.
- (b) The annual membership fee shall be used to promote and maintain the administration, activities and programs of the District Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01A .1007 MEETINGS

- (a) Annual meetings: The district bar shall meet each _____ at a time and place designated by the president. The president, secretary or other officer shall mail or deliver written notice of the annual meeting to each active member of the district bar at the member's last known mailing address on file with the district bar at least ten days before the date of the annual meeting and shall so certify in the official minutes of the meeting. Notice of the meeting mailed by the executive director of the North Carolina State Bar shall also satisfy the notice requirement. Failure to mail or deliver the notice as herein provided shall invalidate any action at the annual meeting.
- (b) Special meetings: Special meetings, if any, may be called at any time by the president or the vice-president. The president, secretary or other officer shall mail or deliver written notice of the special meeting to each active member of the district bar at the member's last known mailing address on file with the district bar at least ten days before the date of any special meeting. Such notice shall set forth the time and place for the special meeting and the purpose(s) thereof. Failure to mail or deliver the notice shall invalidate any action taken at a special meeting.

(c) Notice for meeting to vote on annual membership fee: Notwithstanding the notice periods set forth in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this Rule, the written notice for any meeting at which the active members will vote on whether to impose or increase an annual membership fee shall be mailed or delivered to each active member of the district bar at the member's last known mailing address on file with the North Carolina State Bar at least 30 days before the date of the meeting.

(d) Quorum: Twenty percent of the active members of the district bar shall constitute a quorum, and a quorum shall be required to take official action on behalf of the district bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-18.1; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 7, 1996;
Amended Eff. October 7, 2010.

27 NCAC 01A .1008 DISTRICT BAR FINANCES

(a) Fiscal Year: The district bar's fiscal year shall begin on _____ and shall end on _____.

(b) Duties of treasurer: The treasurer shall maintain the funds of the district bar on deposit, initiate any necessary disbursements and keep appropriate financial records.

(c) Annual financial report: Each _____ before the annual meeting, the treasurer shall prepare the district bar's annual financial report for review by the board of directors, if any, and submission to the district bar's annual meeting and the North Carolina State Bar.

(d) District bar checks: All checks written on district bar accounts (arising from the collection of mandatory dues) that exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00) must be signed by two of the following: (1) the treasurer, (2) any other officer, (3) another member of the board of directors, or (4) the executive secretary/director, if any.

(e) Fidelity bond: If it is anticipated that receipts from membership fees will exceed twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00) for any fiscal year, the district bar shall purchase a fidelity bond at least equal in amount to the anticipated annual receipts to indemnify the district bar for losses attributable to the malfeasance of the treasurer or any other member having access to district bar funds.

(f) Taxpayer identification number: The treasurer shall be responsible for obtaining a federal taxpayer identification number for the district bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-18.1; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 7, 1996;
Amended Eff. July 22, 1999.

27 NCAC 01A .1009 PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

(a) Prohibited Expenditures: Mandatory District Bar dues, if any, shall not be used for the purchase of alcoholic beverages, gifts to public officials, including judges, charitable contributions, recreational activities or expenses of spouses of District Bar members or officers. However, such expenditures may be made from funds derived entirely from the voluntary contributions of District Bar members.

(b) Political Expenditures: The District Bar shall not make any expenditures to fund political and ideological activities.

(c) Political Activities: The District Bar shall not engage in any political or ideological conduct or activity, including the endorsement of candidates and the taking or advocacy of positions on political issues, referendums, bond elections, and the like, however, the District Bar, and persons speaking on its behalf, may take positions on, or comment upon, issues relating to the regulation of the legal profession and issues or matters relating to the improvement of the quality and availability of legal services to the general public.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01A .1010 COMMITTEES

(a) Standing committee(s): The standing committees shall be the Nominating Committee, Pro Bono Committee, Grievance Committee, and Professionalism Committee provided that, with respect to the Grievance Committee, the district meets the State Bar guidelines relating thereto.

(b) Grievance Committee:

- (1) The Grievance Committee shall consist of at least five but not more than thirteen persons appointed by the president to staggered three year terms as provided by the Rules and Regulations of the North Carolina State Bar governing Judicial District Grievance Committees.

- (2) The Grievance Committee shall assist the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar by receiving grievances, investigating grievances, evaluating grievances, informally mediating disputes, facilitating communication between lawyers and clients and referring members of the public to other appropriate committees or agencies for assistance.
 - (3) The Grievance Committee shall operate in strict accordance with the rules and policies of the North Carolina State Bar with respect to district bar grievance committees.
- (c) Special Committees: Special committees may be created and appointed by the president.
- (d) Nominating Committee:
- (1) The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the officers (or the board of directors) of the district bar and shall consist of at least three active members of the district bar who are not officers or directors of the district bar.
 - (2) The Nominating Committee shall meet as necessary for the purpose of nominating active members of the district bar as candidates for officers and councilor(s) and the board of directors, if any.
 - (3) The Nominating Committee members shall serve one-year terms beginning on _____ and ending on _____.
 - (4) Any active member whose name is submitted for consideration for nomination to any office or as a councilor must have indicated his or her willingness to serve if selected.
- (e) Pro Bono Committee:
- (1) The Pro Bono Committee shall consist of at least five active members of the district bar appointed by the president.
 - (2) The Pro Bono Committee shall meet at least once each quarter and shall have the duty of encouraging members of the district bar to provide pro bono legal services. The committee shall also develop programs whereby attorneys not involved in other volunteer legal service programs may provide pro bono legal service in their areas of concentration and practice.
 - (3) The members of the Pro Bono Committee shall serve one-year terms commencing on _____.
- (f) Professionalism Committee:
- (1) The Professionalism Committee shall consist of the three immediate past presidents of the district bar or such other members of the district bar as shall be appointed by the president.
 - (2) The purpose of the Professionalism Committee shall be the promotion of professionalism and thereby the bolstering of public confidence in the legal profession. The committee may further enhance professionalism through CLE programs and, when appropriate, through confidential peer intervention in association with the Professionalism Support Initiative (PSI) which is sponsored and supported by the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. The PSI effort is to investigate and informally assist with client-lawyer, lawyer-lawyer, and lawyer-judge relationships to ameliorate disputes, improve communications, and repair relationships. The Professionalism Committee shall have no authority to discipline any lawyer or judge, or to force any lawyer or judge to take any action. The committee shall not investigate or attempt to resolve complaints of professional misconduct cognizable under the Rules of Professional Conduct and shall act in accordance with Rules 1.6(c) and 8.3 of the Rules of Professional Conduct. The committee shall consult and work with the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism when appropriate.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-18.1; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 7, 1996;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 6, 2002; March 6, 2008; September 25, 2019.*

27 NCAC 01A .1011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS OR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(a) Membership of Board: A Board of Directors consisting of at least _____ active members of the District Bar shall be elected. At all times, the Board of Directors shall include at least one director from each county in the Judicial District. The Board of Directors serving when these bylaws become effective shall continue to serve until the following annual meeting. Beginning on _____ immediately after the effective date of these bylaws, the President shall appoint an initial Board of Directors who shall serve three-year terms commencing on _____, except that the terms of the initial members of the Board shall be staggered at one-year intervals to ensure continuity and experience. To effect the staggered initial terms, the President will determine which of the initial members shall serve terms of less than three years. The State Bar Councilor (or Councilors) from the judicial district shall be an ex officio member (or members) of the District Bar Board of Directors or Executive Committee.

(b) Terms of Directors: After the initial staggered terms of the Board of Directors expire, successors shall be elected by the active members at the annual District Bar meeting, as set out in Rule .1004 (d) of this Section, and Paragraphs (c) and (d) of this Rule. Following the completion of the initial staggered terms, the directors shall serve three-year terms beginning on _____ following their election.

(c) Designated and At-Large Seats in Multi-County Districts: In multi-county districts, one seat on the Board of Directors shall be set aside and designated for each county in the district. Only active members of the District Bar who reside or work in the designated county may be elected to a designated county seat. All other seats on the Board of Directors shall be at-large seats which may be filled by any active member of the District Bar.

(d) Elections: When one or more seats on the Board of Directors become vacant, an election shall be held at the annual meeting of the District Bar. Except as otherwise provided herein, the election shall be conducted as provided for in Rule .1004(d) of this Section. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes cast will be elected, regardless of whether any of the candidates received a majority of the votes cast, provided that designated seats will be filled by the candidates receiving the highest number of votes who live or work in the designated county, regardless of whether any of the candidates received a majority of the votes cast.

(e) Vacancies: If a vacancy occurs on the Board of Directors, the President (or the Board of Directors) shall appoint a successor who shall serve until the next annual meeting of the District Bar. If the vacancy occurs in a designated seat for a particular county within the district, the successor will be selected from among the active members of the District Bar who live or work in the designated county.

(f) Duties of Board of Directors: The Board of Directors shall have the responsibilities described Rules .1004(f) and .1007(c) of this Section. The Board of Directors shall also consult with the officers regarding any matters of District Bar business or policy arising between meetings and may act for the District Bar on an emergency basis if necessary, provided that any such action shall be provisional pending its consideration by the District Bar at its next duly called meeting. The Board of Directors may not impose on its own authority any sort of fee upon the membership.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01A .1012 AMENDMENT OF THE BYLAWS

The membership of the District Bar, by a _____ (majority, two-thirds, etc.) vote of the active members present at any duly called meeting at which there is a quorum present and voting throughout, may amend these bylaws in ways not inconsistent with the constitution of the United States, the policies and rules of the North Carolina State Bar and the laws of the United States and North Carolina.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01A .1013 SELECTION OF NOMINEES FOR DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

Unless otherwise required by law, the following procedures shall be used to determine the nominees to be recommended to the Governor pursuant to G.S. 7A-142 for vacant district court judgeships in the judicial district.

(a) Meeting for Nominations: The nominees shall be selected by secret, written ballot of those members present at a meeting of the district bar called for this purpose. Fifteen (15) days notice of the meeting shall be given, by mail, to the last known address of each district bar member. Alternatively, if a bylaw permitting elections by mail is adopted by the district bar, the procedures set forth in the bylaw and in Rule .0804 of Subchapter 01A of the Rules of the North Carolina State Bar (27 NCAC 01A .0804), shall be followed.

(b) Candidates: Persons who want to be considered for the vacancy shall notify the President in writing five (5) days prior to the meeting at which the election will be conducted or, if the election is by mail, five days prior to the mailing of the ballots.

(c) Voting: Each district bar member eligible to vote pursuant to G.S. 7A-142 may vote for up to five (5) candidates. Cumulative voting is prohibited. Proxy voting is prohibited.

(d) Submission to Governor: The five candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be the nominees to fill the vacancy on the district court and their names, and vote totals, shall be transmitted to the governor. In the event of a tie for fifth place, the names of those candidates involved in the tie shall be transmitted to the governor together with the names of the four candidates receiving the highest number of votes.

History Note: Authority G.S. 7A-142; 84-18.1; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 27, 2003;

Amended Eff. March 6, 2014.

SECTION .1100 - OFFICE OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR

27 NCAC 01A .1101 OFFICE

Until otherwise ordered by the council, the office of the North Carolina State Bar shall be maintained in the city of Raleigh at such place as may be designated by the council.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

SECTION .1200 - FILING PAPERS WITH AND SERVING THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR

27 NCAC 01A .1201 WHEN PAPERS ARE FILED UNDER THESE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Whenever in these rules and regulation there is a requirement that petitions, notices or other documents be filed with or served on the North Carolina State Bar, or the council, the same shall be filed with or served on the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

SECTION .1300 - SEAL

27 NCAC 01A .1301 FORM AND CUSTODY OF SEAL

The North Carolina State Bar shall have a seal round in shape and having the words and figures, "The North Carolina State Bar July 1, 1933," with the word "Seal" in the center. The seal shall remain in the custody of the secretary at the office of the North Carolina State Bar, unless otherwise ordered by the council.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

SECTION .1400 – RULE SECTION NOT FOUND

27 NCAC 01A .1401 PUBLICATION FOR COMMENT

- (a) As a condition precedent to adoption, a proposed rule or amendment to a rule must be published for comment as provided in subsection (c).
- (b) A proposed rule or amendment to a rule must be presented to the Executive Committee and the council prior to publication for comment, and specifically approved for publication by both.
- (c) A proposed rule or amendment to a rule must be published for comment in an official printed or digital publication of the North Carolina State Bar that is mailed or emailed to the membership at least 30 days in advance of its final consideration by the council. The publication of any such proposal must be accompanied by a prominent statement inviting all interested parties to submit comment to the North Carolina State Bar at a specified postal or e-mail address prior to the next meeting of the Executive Committee, the date of which shall be set forth.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court August 23, 2007;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 20, 2018.*

27 NCAC 01A .1402 REVIEW BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

At its next meeting following the publication or republication of any proposed rule or amendment to a rule, the Executive Committee shall review the proposal and any comment that has been received concerning the proposal. The Executive Committee shall then:

- (1) recommend the proposal's adoption by the council;
- (2) recommend the proposal's adoption by the council with nonsubstantive modification;
- (3) recommend to the council that the proposal be republished with substantive modification;

- (4) defer consideration of the matter to its next regular business meeting;
- (5) table the matter; or
- (6) reject the proposal.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. August 23, 2007.

27 NCAC 01A .1403 ACTION BY THE COUNCIL AND REVIEW BY THE NORTH CAROLINA SUPREME COURT

(a) Whenever the Executive Committee recommends adoption of any proposed rule or amendment to a rule in accordance with the procedure set forth in Rule .1402 above, the council at its next regular business meeting shall consider the proposal, the Executive Committee's recommendation, and any comment received from interested parties, and:

- (1) decide whether to adopt the proposed rule or amendment, subject to the approval of the North Carolina Supreme Court as described in G.S. 84-21;
- (2) reject the proposed rule or amendment; or
- (3) refer the matter back to the Executive Committee for reconsideration.

(b) Any proposed rule or amendment to a rule adopted by the council shall be transmitted by the secretary to the North Carolina Supreme Court for its review on a schedule approved by the Court, but in no event later than 183 days following the council's adoption of the proposed rule or amendment.

(c) A proposed rule or amendment to a rule adopted by the council shall take effect when it is entered upon the minutes of the North Carolina Supreme Court.

(d) The secretary shall promptly transmit the official text of any proposed rule or amendment to a rule adopted by the council and approved by the North Carolina Supreme Court to the Office of Administrative Hearings for publication in the North Carolina Administrative Code.

(e) Any action taken by the council or the North Carolina Supreme Court in regard to any proposed rule or amendment to a rule shall be reported in the next issue of the printed publication referenced in Rule .1401 above.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court August 23, 2007;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 20, 2018;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court November 2, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

SUBCHAPTER 1B - DISCIPLINE AND DISABILITY RULES

SECTION .0100 - DISCIPLINE AND DISABILITY OF ATTORNEYS

27 NCAC 01B .0101 GENERAL PROVISIONS

Discipline for misconduct is not intended as punishment for wrongdoing but is for the protection of the public, the courts, and the legal profession. The fact that certain misconduct has remained unchallenged when done by others, or when done at other times, or that it has not been made the subject of earlier disciplinary proceedings, will not be a defense to any charge of misconduct by a member.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01B .0102 PROCEDURE FOR DISCIPLINE

(a) The procedure to discipline members of the bar of this state will be in accordance with the provisions hereinafter set forth.

(b) District bars will not conduct separate proceedings to discipline members of the bar but will assist and cooperate with the North Carolina State Bar in reporting and investigating matters of alleged misconduct on the part of its members.

(c) Concurrent Jurisdiction of State Bar and Courts:

- (1) The Council of the North Carolina State Bar is vested, as an agency of the state, with the control of the discipline, disbarment, and restoration of attorneys practicing law in this state.

- (2) The courts of this state have inherent authority to take disciplinary action against attorneys practicing therein, even in relation to matters not pending in the court exercising disciplinary authority.
- (3) The authority of the North Carolina State Bar and the courts to discipline attorneys is separate and distinct, the North Carolina State Bar having derived its jurisdiction by legislative act and the courts from the inherent power of the courts themselves.
- (4) Neither the North Carolina State Bar nor the courts are authorized or empowered to act for or in the name of the other, and the disciplinary action taken by either entity should be clearly delineated as to the source or basis for the action being taken.
- (5) It is the position of the North Carolina State Bar that no trial court has the authority to preempt a North Carolina State Bar disciplinary proceeding with a pending civil or criminal court proceeding involving attorney conduct, or to dismiss a disciplinary proceeding pending before the North Carolina State Bar.
- (6) Whenever the North Carolina State Bar learns that a court has initiated an inquiry or proceeding regarding alleged improper or unethical conduct of an attorney, the North Carolina State Bar may defer to the court and stay its own proceeding pending completion of the court's inquiry or proceeding. Upon request, the North Carolina State Bar will assist in the court's inquiry or proceeding.
- (7) If the North Carolina State Bar finds probable cause and institutes disciplinary proceedings against an attorney for conduct which subsequently becomes an issue in a criminal or civil proceeding, the court may, in its discretion, defer its inquiry pending the completion of the North Carolina State Bar's proceedings.
- (8) Upon the filing of a complaint by the North Carolina State Bar, the North Carolina State Bar will send a copy of the complaint to the chief resident superior court judge and to all superior court judges regularly assigned to the district in which the attorney maintains his or her law office. The North Carolina State Bar will send a copy of the complaint to the district attorney in the district in which the attorney maintains a law office if the complaint alleges criminal activity by the attorney.
- (9) The North Carolina State Bar will encourage judges to contact the North Carolina State Bar to determine the status of any relevant complaints filed against an attorney before the court takes disciplinary action against the attorney.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-36;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01B .0103 DEFINITIONS

Subject to additional definitions contained in other provisions of this subchapter, the following words and phrases, when used in this subchapter, will have, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the meanings given to them in this rule.

- (1) Admonition - a written form of discipline imposed in cases in which an attorney has committed a minor violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (2) Appellate division - the appellate division of the general court of justice.
- (3) Board - the Board of Continuing Legal Education.
- (4) Board of Continuing Legal Education - a standing committee of the council responsible for the administration of a program of mandatory continuing legal education and law practice assistance.
- (5) Censure - a written form of discipline more serious than a reprimand issued in cases in which an attorney has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct and has caused significant harm or potential significant harm to a client, the administration of justice, the profession, or a member of the public, but the misconduct does not require suspension of the attorney's license.
- (6) Certificate of conviction - a certified copy of any judgment wherein a member of the North Carolina State Bar is convicted of a criminal offense.
- (7) Chairperson of the Grievance Committee - councilor appointed to serve as chairperson of the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (8) Commission - the Disciplinary Hearing Commission of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (9) Commission chairperson - the chairperson of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (10) Complainant or complaining witness - any person who has complained of the conduct of any member of the North Carolina State Bar to the North Carolina State Bar.
- (11) Complaint - a formal pleading filed in the name of the North Carolina State Bar with the commission against a member of the North Carolina State Bar after a finding of probable cause.

- (12) Consolidation of cases - a hearing by a hearing panel of multiple charges, whether related or unrelated in substance, brought against one defendant.
- (13) Council - the Council of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (14) Councilor - a member of the Council of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (15) Counsel - the counsel of the North Carolina State Bar appointed by the council.
- (16) Court or courts of this state - a court authorized and established by the constitution or laws of the state of North Carolina.
- (17) Criminal offense showing professional unfitness - the commission of, attempt to commit, conspiracy to commit, solicitation or subornation of any felony or any crime that involves false swearing, misrepresentation, deceit, extortion, theft, bribery, embezzlement, false pretenses, fraud, interference with the judicial or political process, larceny, misappropriation of funds or property, overthrow of the government, perjury, willful failure to file a tax return, or any other offense involving moral turpitude or showing professional unfitness.
- (18) Defendant - a member of the North Carolina State Bar against whom a finding of probable cause has been made.
- (19) Disabled or disability - a mental or physical condition which significantly impairs the professional judgment, performance, or competence of an attorney.
- (20) Grievance - alleged misconduct.
- (21) Grievance Committee - the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar or any of its panels acting as the Grievance Committee respecting the grievances and other matters referred to it by the chairperson of the Grievance Committee.
- (22) Hearing panel - a hearing panel designated under Rule .0108(a)(2), .0114(d), .0114(x), .0118(b)(2), .0125(a)(6), .0125(b)(7) or .0125(c)(2) of this subchapter.
- (23) Illicit drug - any controlled substance as defined in the North Carolina Controlled Substances Act, section 5, chapter 90, of the North Carolina General Statutes, or its successor, which is used or possessed without a prescription or in violation of the laws of this state or the United States.
- (24) Incapacity or incapacitated - condition determined in a judicial proceeding under the laws of this or any other jurisdiction that an attorney is mentally defective, an inebriate, mentally disordered, or incompetent from want of understanding to manage his or her own affairs by reason of the excessive use of intoxicants, drugs, or other cause.
- (25) Investigation - the gathering of information with respect to alleged misconduct, alleged disability, or a petition for reinstatement.
- (26) Investigator - any person designated to assist in the investigation of alleged misconduct or facts pertinent to a petition for reinstatement.
- (27) Lawyer Assistance Program Board – the Lawyer Assistance Program Board of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (28) Letter of caution - communication from the Grievance Committee to an attorney stating that the past conduct of the attorney, while not the basis for discipline, is unprofessional or not in accord with accepted professional practice.
- (29) Letter of notice - a communication to a respondent setting forth the substance of a grievance.
- (30) Letter of warning - written communication from the Grievance Committee or the commission to an attorney stating that past conduct of the attorney, while not the basis for discipline, is an unintentional, minor, or technical violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct and may be the basis for discipline if continued or repeated.
- (31) Member - a member of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (32) Office of the Counsel - the office and staff maintained by the counsel of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (33) Office of the secretary - the office and staff maintained by the secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (34) Party - after a complaint has been filed, the North Carolina State Bar as plaintiff or the member as defendant.
- (35) Plaintiff - after a complaint has been filed, the North Carolina State Bar.
- (36) Preliminary hearing - hearing by the Grievance Committee to determine whether probable cause exists.
- (37) Probable cause - a finding by the Grievance Committee that there is reasonable cause to believe that a member of the North Carolina State Bar is guilty of misconduct justifying disciplinary action.

- (38) Reprimand - a written form of discipline more serious than an admonition issued in cases in which a defendant has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct and has caused harm or potential harm to a client, the administration of justice, the profession, or a member of the public, but the misconduct does not require a censure.
- (39) Respondent - a member of the North Carolina State Bar who has been accused of misconduct or whose conduct is under investigation, but as to which conduct there has not yet been a determination of whether probable cause exists.
- (40) Revised Rules of Professional Conduct - the Rules of Professional Conduct adopted by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar and approved by the North Carolina Supreme Court effective July 24, 1997.
- (41) Rules of Professional Conduct - the Rules of Professional Conduct adopted by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar and approved by the North Carolina Supreme Court and which were in effect from October 7, 1985 through July 23, 1997.
- (42) Secretary - the secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (43) Supreme Court - the Supreme Court of North Carolina.
- (44) Will - when used in these rules, means a direction or order which is mandatory or obligatory.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amended Eff. October 8, 2009; February 3, 2000; December 30, 1998.

27 NCAC 01B .0104 STATE BAR COUNCIL: POWERS AND DUTIES IN DISCIPLINE AND DISABILITY MATTERS

The Council of the North Carolina State Bar will have the power and duty:

- (1) to supervise and conduct disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the provisions hereinafter set forth;
- (2) to appoint members of the commission as provided by statute;
- (3) to appoint a counsel. The counsel will serve at the pleasure of the council. The counsel will be a member of the North Carolina State Bar but will not be permitted to engage in the private practice of law;
- (4) to order the transfer of a member to disability inactive status when such member has been judicially declared incompetent or has been involuntarily committed to institutional care because of incompetence or disability;
- (5) to accept or reject the surrender of the license to practice law of any member of the North Carolina State Bar;
- (6) to order the disbarment of any member whose resignation is accepted;
- (7) to review the report of any hearing panel upon a petition for reinstatement of a disbarred attorney and to make final determination as to whether the license will be restored.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amended Eff. October 8, 2009; September 7, 1995.

27 NCAC 01B .0105 CHAIR OF THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE: POWERS AND DUTIES

(a) The chair of the Grievance Committee will have the power and duty

- (1) to supervise the activities of the counsel;
- (2) to recommend to the Grievance Committee that an investigation be initiated;
- (3) to recommend to the Grievance Committee that a grievance be dismissed;
- (4) to direct a letter of notice to a respondent or direct the counsel to issue letters of notice in such cases or under such circumstances as the chair deems appropriate;
- (5) to issue, at the direction and in the name of the Grievance Committee, a letter of caution, letter of warning, an admonition, a reprimand, or a censure to a member;
- (6) to notify a respondent that a grievance has been dismissed, and to notify the complainant in accordance with Rule .0125 of this subchapter;
- (7) to call meetings of the Grievance Committee;
- (8) to issue subpoenas in the name of the North Carolina State Bar or direct the secretary to issue such subpoenas;
- (9) to administer or direct the administration of oaths or affirmations to witnesses;

- (10) to sign complaints and petitions in the name of the North Carolina State Bar;
 - (11) to determine whether proceedings should be instituted to activate a suspension which has been stayed;
 - (12) to enter orders of reciprocal discipline in the name of the Grievance Committee;
 - (13) to direct the counsel to institute proceedings in the appropriate forum to determine if an attorney is in violation of an order of the Grievance Committee, the commission, or the council;
 - (14) to rule on requests for reconsideration of decisions of the Grievance Committee regarding grievances;
 - (15) to tax costs of the disciplinary procedures against any defendant against whom the Grievance Committee imposes discipline, including a minimum administrative cost of fifty dollars (\$50.00);
 - (16) to dismiss a grievance upon request of the complainant, where it appears that there is no probable cause to believe that the respondent has violated the Rules of Professional Conduct and where counsel consents to the dismissal;
 - (17) to dismiss a grievance where it appears that the grievance has not been filed within the time period set out in Rule .0111(f)(4);
 - (18) to dismiss a grievance where it appears that the complaint, even if true, fails to state a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct and where counsel consents to the dismissal;
 - (19) to dismiss a grievance where it appears that there is no probable cause to believe that the respondent has violated the Rules of Professional Conduct and where counsel and a member of the Grievance Committee designated by the committee consent to the dismissal;
 - (20) to appoint a subcommittee to make recommendations to the council for such amendments to the Discipline and Disability Rules as the subcommittee deems necessary or appropriate;
 - (21) to appoint the members of a grievance review panel; and
 - (22) to perform such other duties as the council may direct.
- (b) Absence of Chair and Delegation of Duties. The president, vice-chair, or a member of the Grievance Committee designated by the president or the chair or vice-chair of the committee may perform the functions, exercise the power, and discharge the duties of the chair or any vice-chair when the chair or a vice-chair is absent or disqualified.
- (c) Delegation of Authority. The chair may delegate his or her authority to the president, the vice- chair of the committee, or a member of the Grievance Committee.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 20, 1995; March 6, 1997; October 2, 1997;
 December 30, 1998; March 3, 1999; February 3, 2000; March 10, 2011; August 23, 2012;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court December 20, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's
 minutes March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01B .0106 GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE: POWERS AND DUTIES

The Grievance Committee will have the power and duty

- (1) to direct the counsel to investigate any alleged misconduct or disability of a member of the North Carolina State Bar coming to its attention;
- (2) to hold preliminary hearings, find probable cause and direct that complaints be filed;
- (3) to dismiss grievances upon a finding of no probable cause;
- (4) to issue a letter of caution to a respondent in cases wherein misconduct is not established but the activities of the respondent are unprofessional or not in accord with accepted professional practice. The letter of caution will recommend that the respondent be more professional in his or her practice in one or more ways which are to be specifically identified;
- (5) to issue a letter of warning to a respondent in cases wherein no probable cause is found but it is determined by the Grievance Committee that the conduct of the respondent is an unintentional, minor, or technical violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct. The letter of warning will advise the respondent that he or she may be subject to discipline if such conduct is continued or repeated. The warning will specify in one or more ways the conduct or practice for which the respondent is being warned. A copy of the letter of warning will be maintained in the office of the counsel for three years subject to the confidentiality provisions of Rule .0133 of this subchapter;
- (6) to issue an admonition in cases wherein the respondent has committed a minor violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct;

- (7) to issue a reprimand in cases wherein the respondent has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct, and has caused harm or potential harm to a client, the administration of justice, the profession, or a member of the public, but the misconduct does not require a censure;
- (8) to issue a censure in cases wherein the respondent has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct and has caused significant harm or potential significant harm to a client, the administration of justice, the profession, or a member of the public, but the misconduct does not require suspension of the respondent's license;
- (9) to direct that a petition be filed seeking a determination whether a member of the North Carolina State Bar is disabled;
- (10) to include in any order of admonition, reprimand, or censure a provision requiring the respondent to complete a reasonable amount of continuing legal education in addition to the minimum amount required by the North Carolina Supreme Court;
- (11) in its discretion, to refer grievances primarily attributable to unsound law office management to a program of law office management training approved by the State Bar in accordance with Rule .0112(i) of this subchapter;
- (12) in its discretion, to refer grievances primarily attributable to the respondent's substance abuse or mental health problem to the Lawyer Assistance Program in accordance with Rule .0112(j) of this subchapter;
- (13) in its discretion, to refer grievances primarily attributable to the respondent's failure to employ sound trust accounting techniques to the trust account supervisory program in accordance with Rule .0112(k) of this subchapter;
- (14) to operate the Attorney Client Assistance Program (ACAP). Functions of ACAP can include without limitation:
 - (a) assisting clients and lawyers in resolving issues arising in the client/lawyer relationship that might be resolved without the need to open grievance files; and
 - (b) operating the Fee Dispute Resolution Program;
- (15) to consider and decide whether to follow the recommendation of a grievance review panel; and
- (16) to perform such other duties as the council may direct.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 3, 1999; December 20, 2000; August 23, 2012;
 September 25, 2019;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court December 20, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01B .0107 COUNSEL: POWERS AND DUTIES

The counsel will have the power and duty:

- (1) to initiate an investigation concerning alleged misconduct of a member;
- (2) to direct a letter of notice to a respondent when authorized by the chairperson of the Grievance Committee;
- (3) to investigate all matters involving alleged misconduct whether initiated by the filing of a grievance or otherwise;
- (4) to recommend to the chairperson of the Grievance Committee that a matter be dismissed, that a letter of caution, or a letter of warning be issued, or that the Grievance Committee hold a preliminary hearing;
- (5) to prosecute all disciplinary proceedings before the Grievance Committee, hearing panels, and the courts;
- (6) to represent the North Carolina State Bar in any trial, hearing, or other proceeding concerning the alleged disability of a member;
- (7) to appear on behalf of the North Carolina State Bar at hearings conducted by the Grievance Committee, hearing panels, or any other agency or court concerning any motion or other matter arising out of a disciplinary or disability proceeding;
- (8) to appear at hearings conducted with respect to petitions for reinstatement of license by suspended or disbarred attorneys or by attorneys transferred to disability inactive status, to cross-examine witnesses testifying in support of such petitions, and to present evidence, if any, in opposition to such petitions;
- (9) to employ such deputy counsel, investigators, and other administrative personnel in such numbers as the council may authorize;
- (10) to maintain permanent records of all matters processed and of the disposition of such matters;

- (11) to perform such other duties as the council may direct;
- (12) after a finding of probable cause by the Grievance Committee, to designate the particular violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct to be alleged in a formal complaint filed with the commission;
- (13) to file amendments to complaints and petitions arising out of the same transactions or occurrences as the allegations in the original complaints or petitions, in the name of the North Carolina State Bar, with the prior approval of the chairperson of the Grievance Committee;
- (14) after a complaint is filed with the commission, to dismiss any or all claims in the complaint or to negotiate and recommend consent orders of discipline to the hearing panel.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-31;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amended Eff. October 8, 2009; March 3, 1999.

27 NCAC 01B .0108 CHAIRPERSON OF THE HEARING COMMISSION: POWERS AND DUTIES

- (a) The chairperson of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission of the North Carolina State Bar will have the power and duty:
- (1) to receive complaints alleging misconduct and petitions alleging the disability of a member filed by the counsel; petitions requesting reinstatement of license by members who have been involuntarily transferred to disability inactive status, suspended, or disbarred; motions seeking the activation of suspensions which have been stayed; and proposed consent orders of disbarment;
 - (2) to assign three members of the commission, consisting of two members of the North Carolina State Bar and one nonlawyer to hear complaints, petitions, motions, and post-hearing motions pursuant to Rule .0109 of this subchapter. The chairperson will designate one of the attorney members as chairperson of the hearing panel. No panel member who hears a disciplinary matter may serve on the panel which hears the attorney's reinstatement petition. The chairperson of the commission may designate himself or herself to serve as one of the attorney members of any hearing panel and will be chairperson of any hearing panel on which he or she serves. Post-hearing motions filed pursuant to Rule .0109 of this Subchapter will be considered by the same hearing panel assigned to the original trial proceeding. Hearing panel members who are ineligible or unable to serve for any reason will be replaced with members selected by the commission chairperson;
 - (3) to set the time and place for the hearing on each complaint or petition;
 - (4) to subpoena witnesses and compel their attendance and to compel the production of books, papers, and other documents deemed necessary or material to any hearing. The chairperson may designate the secretary to issue such subpoenas;
 - (5) to consolidate, in his or her discretion for hearing, two or more cases in which a subsequent complaint or complaints have been served upon a defendant within ninety days of the date of service of the first or a preceding complaint;
 - (6) to enter orders disbarring members by consent;
 - (7) to enter an order suspending a member pending disposition of a disciplinary proceeding when the member has been convicted of a serious crime or has pled no contest to a serious crime and the court has accepted the plea;
 - (8) to review decisions by the Chair of the State Bar's Grievance Committee to designate a complainant as vexatious and to enter orders upholding or vacating the designation;
 - (9) to receive and rule upon petitions to expunge orders of the Commission that imposed admonition, reprimand, or censure;
 - (10) to receive and rule upon petitions to seal orders of the Commission that imposed a stayed suspension.
- (b) The vice-chairperson of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission may perform the function of the chairperson in any matter when the chairperson is absent or disqualified.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 7, 1995; October 8, 2009; March 19, 2025;
 Eff. April 1, 2025;
 Amended Eff. June 1, 2026.

27 NCAC 01B .0109 HEARING PANEL: POWERS AND DUTIES

Hearing panels of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission of the North Carolina State Bar will have the following powers and duties:

- (1) to hold hearings on complaints alleging misconduct, or petitions seeking a determination of disability or reinstatement, or motions seeking the activation of suspensions which have been stayed, and to conduct proceedings to determine if persons or corporations should be held in contempt pursuant to G.S. 84-28.1(b1);
- (2) to enter orders regarding discovery and other procedures in connection with such hearings, including, in disability matters, the examination of a member by such qualified medical experts as the panel will designate;
- (3) to subpoena witnesses and compel their attendance, and to compel the production of books, papers, and other documents deemed necessary or material to any hearing. Subpoenas will be issued by the chairperson of the hearing panel in the name of the commission. The chairperson may direct the secretary to issue such subpoenas;
- (4) to administer or direct the administration of oaths or affirmations to witnesses at hearings;
- (5) to make findings of fact and conclusions of law;
- (6) to enter orders dismissing complaints in matters before the panel;
- (7) to enter orders of discipline against or letters of warning to defendants in matters before the panel;
- (8) to tax costs of the disciplinary proceedings against any defendant against whom discipline is imposed, provided, however, that such costs will not include the compensation of any member of the council, panels, or agencies of the North Carolina State Bar;
- (9) to enter orders transferring a member to disability inactive status;
- (10) to report to the council its findings of fact and recommendations after hearings on petitions for reinstatement of disbarred attorneys;
- (11) to grant or deny petitions of attorneys seeking transfer from disability inactive status to active status;
- (12) to enter orders reinstating suspended attorneys or denying reinstatement. An order denying reinstatement may include additional sanctions in the event violations of the petitioner's order of suspension are found;
- (13) to enter orders activating suspensions which have been stayed or continuing the stays of such suspensions.
- (14) to enter orders holding persons and corporations in contempt pursuant to G.S. 84-28.1(b1) and imposing such sanctions allowed by law.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28; 84-28.1;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. October 8, 2009; March 3, 1999.

27 NCAC 01B .0110 SECRETARY: POWERS AND DUTIES IN DISCIPLINE AND DISABILITY MATTERS

The secretary will have the following powers and duties in regard to discipline and disability procedures:

- (1) to receive grievances for transmittal to the counsel, to receive complaints and petitions for transmittal to the commission chairperson, and to receive affidavits of surrender of license for transmittal to the council;
- (2) to issue summonses and subpoenas when so directed by the president, the chairperson of the Grievance Committee, the chairperson of the commission, or the chairperson of any hearing panel;
- (3) to maintain a record and file of all grievances not dismissed by the Grievance Committee;
- (4) to perform all necessary ministerial acts normally performed by the clerk of the superior court in complaints filed before the commission;
- (5) to enter orders of reinstatement where petitions for reinstatement of suspended attorneys are unopposed by the counsel;
- (6) to dismiss reinstatement petitions based on the petitioner's failure to comply with the rules governing the provision and transmittal of the record of reinstatement proceedings;
- (7) to determine the amount of costs assessed in disciplinary proceedings by the commission.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23; 84-32(c);
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. October 8, 2009.

27 NCAC 01B .0111 GRIEVANCES: FORM AND FILING

- (a) Standing Requirements – To be considered by the State Bar, a grievance must

- (1) allege conduct that, if true, constitutes attorney misconduct in violation of Chapter 84 of the North Carolina General Statutes and/or constitutes a violation of the North Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct; and
 - (2) be filed by a person with standing, defined as:
 - (A) An attorney or judge pursuant to the obligation to report misconduct in accordance with Rule of Professional Conduct 8.3;
 - (B) A judge, attorney, court employee, juror, party, or client in the legal matter that is the subject of the grievance; or
 - (C) A person who has a cognizable interest in or connection with the legal matter or facts alleged in the grievance, or that person's representative.
 - (3) The State Bar may open and investigate a grievance upon its own initiative if it discovers facts that, if true, would constitute attorney misconduct.
 - (4) If the counsel receives information that a member has used or is using illicit substances, the counsel will follow the provisions of Rule .0130 of this Subchapter.
- (b) Grievance Filing Form. The counsel may require that a grievance be reduced to writing and may prepare and require use of standard forms for this purpose.
- (c) The counsel may investigate any allegations of attorney misconduct coming to the counsel's attention.
- (d) Confidential Reports of Attorney Misconduct. The State Bar may keep confidential the identity of an attorney or judge who reports alleged misconduct pursuant to Rule of Professional Conduct 8.3 and who requests to remain anonymous. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the North Carolina State Bar will reveal the identity of a reporting attorney or judge to the respondent when such disclosure is required by law, or by considerations of due process or when identification of the reporting attorney or judge is essential to preparation of the respondent's defense to the grievance or defense to a formal disciplinary complaint.
- (e) The counsel may decline to investigate the following allegations:
- (1) that a member provided ineffective assistance of counsel in a criminal case, unless a court has granted a motion for appropriate relief based upon the member's conduct;
 - (2) that a plea entered in a criminal case was not made voluntarily and knowingly, unless a court granted a motion for appropriate relief based upon the member's conduct;
 - (3) that a member's advice or strategy in a civil or criminal matter was inadequate or ineffective; and
 - (4) that a criminal prosecutor improperly exercised discretion in declining to bring criminal charges.
- (f) Limitation of Grievances.
- (1) There is no time limitation for initiation of any grievance based upon a plea of guilty to a felony or upon conviction of a felony.
 - (2) There is no time limitation for initiation of any grievance based upon allegations of conduct that constitutes a felony, without regard to whether the lawyer is charged, prosecuted, or convicted of a crime for the conduct.
 - (3) There is no time limitation for initiation of any grievance based upon conduct that violates the Rules of Professional Conduct and has been found by a court to be intentional conduct by the lawyer. As used in this Rule, "court" means a state court of general jurisdiction of any state or of the District of Columbia or a federal court.
 - (4) All other grievances must be initiated within six years after the last act giving rise to the grievance.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 20, 1995; December 30, 1998; October 1, 2003;
 October 8, 2009; March 19, 2025.*

27 NCAC 01B .0112 INVESTIGATIONS: INITIAL DETERMINATION; NOTICE AND RESPONSE; COMMITTEE REFERRALS

- (a) Investigation Authority - Subject to the policy supervision of the council and the supervision of the chair of the Grievance Committee, the counsel, or other personnel under the authority of the counsel, will review the grievance, conduct any investigation the counsel determines to be necessary and appropriate, and submit to the chair a report detailing the facts established by the investigation and a recommendation for disposition of the grievance.
- (b) Letter of Notice, Respondent's Response, and Request for Copy of Grievance - If the counsel serves a letter of notice upon the respondent, it will be served by certified mail or by personal service. If the respondent consents to accept service of the letter of notice by email, the letter of notice may be served by emailing the letter of notice to the respondent's email

address of record with the State Bar membership department. The respondent's response to the letter of notice will be due within 15 days of service of the letter of notice upon the respondent. The response to the letter of notice shall include a full and fair disclosure of all facts and circumstances pertaining to the alleged misconduct. The response must be in writing and signed by the respondent.

(c) Provision of Written Grievance and Supporting Materials to Respondent. Upon request of the respondent, the counsel will provide to the respondent a copy of the written grievance and any supporting material the complainant submitted with the grievance; provided that, if the grievance was submitted by a judge or an attorney pursuant to the obligation to report professional misconduct in accordance with Rule of Professional Conduct 8.3, and if the judge or attorney requests anonymity pursuant to Rule .0111(d) of this Subchapter, the State Bar may redact the judge's or attorney's identifying information.

(d) Request for Copy of Respondent's Response – If the complainant requests it, and unless the respondent objects in writing, the counsel may provide to the complainant a copy of the respondent's response to the letter of notice.

(e) Subpoenas - For reasonable cause, the chair of the Grievance Committee may issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses, including the respondent, for examination concerning the grievance and to compel the production of documents, records, writings, communications, and other data of any kind that the chair determines are necessary or material to the inquiry. Each subpoena will be issued by the chair or by the secretary at the direction of the chair. The counsel, deputy counsel, investigator, or any members of the Grievance Committee designated by the chair may examine any such witness under oath or otherwise.

(f) Grievance Committee Action on Final Reports – The Grievance Committee will consider the grievance as soon as practicable after it receives the final report of the counsel, except as otherwise provided in these rules.

(g) Dismissal Upon Request of Complainant - The investigation into alleged misconduct of the respondent will not be abated by settlement or compromise of a dispute between the complainant and the respondent, or by the respondent's payment of restitution. The chair of the Grievance Committee may dismiss a grievance upon request of the complainant and with consent of the counsel where it appears that there is no probable cause to believe that the respondent violated the Rules of Professional Conduct.

(h) Referral to Law Office Management Training

- (1) If, at any time before a finding of probable cause, the Grievance Committee determines that the alleged misconduct is primarily attributable to the respondent's failure to employ sound law office management techniques and procedures, the committee may offer the respondent an opportunity to voluntarily participate in a law office management training program approved by the State Bar before the committee considers discipline.

If the respondent accepts the committee's offer to participate in the program, the respondent will be required to complete a course of training in law office management prescribed by the chair which may include a comprehensive site audit of the respondent's records and procedures as well as attendance at continuing legal education seminars. The respondent must participate personally in the program, must communicate directly with the program staff, and must provide required documentation directly to the program staff. If the respondent does not accept the committee's offer, the grievance will be returned to the committee's agenda for consideration of imposition of discipline.

- (2) Completion of Law Office Management Training Program – If the respondent successfully completes the law office management training program, the committee may consider the respondent's successful completion of the program as a mitigating circumstance and may, but is not required to, dismiss the grievance for good cause shown. If the respondent fails to successfully complete the program as agreed, the grievance will be returned to the committee's agenda for consideration of imposition of discipline. The requirement that a respondent complete law office management training pursuant to this rule shall be in addition to the respondent's obligation to satisfy the minimum continuing legal education requirements contained in 27 NCAC 01D .1517.

(i) Referral to Lawyer Assistance Program

- (1) If, at any time before a finding of probable cause, the Grievance Committee determines that the alleged misconduct is primarily attributable to the respondent's substance use disorder or mental health condition, the committee may offer the respondent an opportunity to voluntarily participate in a rehabilitation program under the supervision of the Lawyer Assistance Program Board before the committee considers imposition of discipline.

If the respondent accepts the committee's offer to participate in a rehabilitation program, the respondent must provide the committee with a written acknowledgement of the referral on a form approved by the chair. The acknowledgement of the referral must include the respondent's waiver of any right of confidentiality that might otherwise exist to permit the Lawyer Assistance Program to provide the

committee with the information necessary for the committee to determine whether the respondent is in compliance with the rehabilitation program. The respondent must participate personally in the program, must communicate directly with the program staff, and must provide required documentation directly to the program staff. If the respondent does not accept the committee's offer, the grievance will be returned to the committee's agenda for consideration of imposition of discipline.

- (2) Completion of Rehabilitation Program – If the respondent successfully completes the rehabilitation program, the committee may consider successful completion of the program as a mitigating circumstance and may, but is not required to, dismiss the grievance for good cause shown. If the respondent fails to complete the rehabilitation program or fails to cooperate with the Lawyer Assistance Program Board, the Lawyer Assistance Program will report that failure to the counsel and the grievance will be returned to the committee's agenda for consideration of imposition of discipline.

(j) Referral to Trust Accounting Compliance Program

- (1) Voluntary Deferral to Trust Account Compliance Program. If, at any time before a finding of probable cause, the Grievance Committee determines that the alleged misconduct is primarily attributable to the respondent's failure to employ sound trust accounting techniques, the committee may offer the respondent an opportunity to participate voluntarily in the Trust Account Compliance Program of the State Bar's Trust Account Compliance Department (the program) for up to two years before the committee considers imposition of discipline. Policies governing the criteria and procedures for eligibility to participate in the program, participation in, and completion of the program shall be established by the Council. If the respondent accepts the committee's offer to participate in the compliance program, the respondent must fully cooperate with the staff of the Trust Account Compliance Department and must produce to the staff all documentation and proof of compliance requested by the staff. The respondent must participate personally in the program, must communicate directly with the program staff, and must provide required documentation directly to the program staff. If the respondent does not accept the committee's offer, the grievance will be returned to the committee's agenda for consideration of imposition of discipline.
- (2) Completion of Trust Account Compliance Program. If the respondent successfully completes the program, the committee may consider successful completion of the program as a mitigating circumstance and may, but is not required to, dismiss the grievance for good cause shown. If the respondent does not fully cooperate with the staff of the Trust Account Compliance Department and/or does not successfully complete the program, the grievance will be returned to the committee's agenda for consideration of imposition of discipline.
- (3) Ineligible for Referral. The committee will not refer to the program:
 - (A) any respondent whose grievance file involves possible misappropriation of entrusted funds, criminal conduct, dishonesty, fraud, misrepresentation, or deceit, or any other alleged misconduct the committee determines to be inappropriate for referral;
 - (B) any respondent who has not cooperated fully and timely with the committee's investigation;
 - (C) any respondent who has already participated in the program as the result of the conduct in issue; or
 - (D) any respondent who declined an offer to participate in the program before the conduct at issue was referred to the Grievance Committee.
- (4) Termination of Deferral Upon Discovery of Evidence of Serious Misconduct. If the Office of Counsel or the committee learns of evidence that a respondent who is participating in the program may have misappropriated entrusted funds, engaged in criminal conduct, or engaged in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, misrepresentation, or deceit, the chair will terminate the respondent's participation in the program and the disciplinary process will proceed.
- (5) Referral No Defense to Allegations of Professional Misconduct. Referral to the Trust Accounting Compliance Program is not a defense to allegations of professional misconduct and does not immunize a lawyer from the disciplinary consequences of such conduct.

(k) Individualized Deferrals Program

- (1) If, at any time before a finding of probable cause, the Grievance Committee, the Chair of the Grievance Committee, or a representative of the Grievance Committee Chair appointed by the Chair determines that, due to the nature of the respondent's alleged misconduct, the respondent should be offered a deferral agreement as an alternative to discipline, the Grievance Committee may defer disposition of the grievance and offer the respondent an opportunity to comply voluntarily with a deferral agreement. If the respondent rejects the offer, the grievance shall proceed as otherwise provided in this chapter.

- (2) The deferral agreement shall impose specific conditions the respondent must satisfy during a specified period not to exceed one year. For good cause shown, the committee may extend the time during which compliance with the conditions is required. The respondent shall collaborate with the Office of Counsel in development of conditions to include in the deferral agreement that address the underlying misconduct. However, the Grievance Committee shall determine all conditions to be included in the deferral agreement. Deferral agreement conditions may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (A) Appointment of a practice monitor for the respondent's practice;
 - (B) Successful completion of specified continuing legal education courses, or other courses of study;
 - (C) Successful completion of an educational or other consulting program including, but not limited to, a program offered by the respondent's malpractice insurance carrier;
 - (D) Attainment of a passing score on the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam;
 - (E) Restitution, if practicable;
 - (F) Written statement of reconciliation or apology to the court, client, or other person or institution adversely affected by the respondent's conduct.
- (3) If the respondent accepts the Grievance Committee's offer to enter into a deferral agreement, the terms of the deferral agreement shall be set forth in writing. The written deferral agreement shall include the following:
- (A) The respondent's admission to the misconduct at issue in the grievance investigation;
 - (B) The respondent's agreement that, should the respondent fail to comply with the deferral agreement, the respondent's admission to the misconduct at issue in the grievance investigation may be considered by the Grievance Committee and/or offered into evidence without objection in any subsequent proceeding arising from the underlying grievance;
 - (C) A statement by the respondent that the respondent is participating in the deferral agreement freely and voluntarily and understands the nature and consequences of participation;
 - (D) A statement that the respondent accepts responsibility for the costs of the deferral conditions;
 - (E) An agreement by the respondent not to violate the Rules of Professional Conduct of this or any other jurisdiction while the deferral agreement is in effect;
 - (F) A statement specifying the general purpose of the deferral agreement;
 - (G) A specific and complete list of all conditions of the deferral agreement;
 - (H) A description of how the respondent's compliance with the deferral agreement's conditions will be monitored;
 - (I) The date by which the conditions of the deferral agreement must be completed;
 - (J) A description of how the respondent will provide evidence of the successful completion of the deferral agreement;
 - (K) The respondent's signature.
- (4) A respondent is eligible to participate in a deferral agreement as an alternative to discipline when there is little likelihood of harm to the public, the respondent's participation in the deferral agreement is likely to benefit the respondent, and the deferral agreement conditions are likely to accomplish the goals of the deferral agreement. A respondent is not eligible for a deferral agreement as an alternative to discipline if any of the following circumstances are present:
- (A) The respondent's alleged misconduct, standing alone, is likely to result in discipline that is more severe than a reprimand;
 - (B) The respondent's alleged misconduct is part of a pattern of misconduct that is unlikely to be changed by a deferral;
 - (C) The respondent's alleged misconduct is of the same nature as misconduct for which the respondent has been previously disciplined;
 - (D) The respondent's alleged misconduct involves dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation that reflects adversely on the lawyer's fitness as a lawyer;
 - (E) The respondent's alleged misconduct resulted in substantial harm to a client or other person or entity;
 - (F) The respondent's alleged misconduct involves misappropriation of funds or other property;
 - (G) The respondent's alleged misconduct involves a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer in other respects;

- (H) The respondent's alleged misconduct involves sexual activity with a client, sexual communications with a client, or request, requirement, or demand for sexual activity or sexual communications with a client as a condition of any professional representation.
- (5) The respondent shall pay all costs incurred in connection with completing the conditions of the deferral agreement.
- (6) The respondent must participate personally in the deferral program, must communicate directly with the deferral program staff, and must provide required documentation directly to the deferral program staff.
- (7) Upon the respondent's successful completion of the conditions in the deferral agreement, the Grievance Committee, the Chair of the Grievance Committee, or a representative of the Grievance Committee Chair appointed by the Chair shall dismiss the underlying grievance. If the grievance is dismissed, the respondent shall not be considered to have been disciplined; however, the respondent's participation in a deferral agreement as an alternative to discipline may be considered by the Grievance Committee in reviewing any subsequent grievance and offered into evidence without objection in any subsequent disciplinary proceeding within three years after the expiration of the deferral agreement.
- (8) If the respondent fails to comply with the terms of the deferral agreement, the Office of Counsel shall notify the respondent of the apparent noncompliance and shall provide the respondent an opportunity to respond to those allegations. The respondent shall be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations in the same manner as prescribed by Rule .0112(b) of this subchapter. If the Grievance Committee determines that the respondent has failed to comply with the deferral agreement, the Grievance Committee may modify the deferral agreement or terminate the deferral agreement and proceed with the matter as otherwise provided in this chapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 20, 1995; March 6, 1997; December 30, 1998; December 20, 2000; March 6, 2002; March 10, 2011; August 25, 2011; August 23, 2012; March 5, 2015; March 19, 2025.

27 NCAC 01B .0113 PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

- (a) Probable Cause - The Grievance Committee or any of its subcommittees acting as the Grievance Committee with respect to grievances referred to it by the chair of the Grievance Committee will determine whether there is probable cause to believe that a respondent committed misconduct justifying disciplinary action. In its discretion, the Grievance Committee or a panel thereof may find probable cause regardless of whether the respondent has been served with a written letter of notice. The respondent may waive the necessity of a finding of probable cause with the consent of the counsel and the chair of the Grievance Committee. A decision of a panel of the committee may not be appealed to the Grievance Committee as a whole or to another panel (except as provided in 27 N.C.A.C. 1A, .0701(a)(3)).
- (b) Oaths and Affirmations - The chair of the Grievance Committee will have the power to administer oaths and affirmations.
- (c) Record of Grievance Committee's Determination - The chair will keep a record of the Grievance Committee's determination concerning each grievance and file the record with the secretary.
- (d) Closed Meetings - The counsel and deputy counsel, the witness under examination, interpreters when needed, and, if deemed necessary, a stenographer or operator of a recording device may be present while the committee is in session and deliberating, but no persons other than members may be present while the committee is voting.
- (e) Procedure When Counsel Recommends Admonition, Reprimand, Censure, or Referral to the Disciplinary Hearing Commission. If the counsel recommends admonition, reprimand, censure, or referral to the Disciplinary Hearing Commission,
 - (1) At least 30 days before the committee's consideration of the counsel's recommendation, the counsel shall provide to the respondent:
 - (A) all financial audits and all other materials provided to the committee that are not privileged and are not work product; and
 - (B) any evidence in the possession of the State Bar that indicates the respondent did not engage in the alleged misconduct, or a certification that no such evidence is in the State Bar's possession.
 - (2) The respondent shall have the opportunity to hear the counsel's presentation of the factual basis for the recommendation and to address the subcommittee to which the grievance is assigned. The chair of the Grievance Committee shall have discretion to offer respondents the option of participating via video conference and to determine the amount of time the counsel and the respondent will have to address the

subcommittee, ensuring the respondent is allowed at least the same amount of time as is granted to the counsel for its recitation of factual basis.

(f) Disclosure of Matters Before the Grievance Committee - The results of any deliberation by the Grievance Committee will be disclosed to the counsel and the secretary for use in the performance of their duties. Otherwise, a member of the committee, the staff of the North Carolina State Bar, any interpreter, stenographer, operator of a recording device, or any typist who transcribes recorded testimony may disclose matters occurring before the committee only when so directed by the committee or a court of record.

(g) Quorum Requirement - At any preliminary hearing held by the Grievance Committee, a quorum of one-half of the members will be required to conduct any business. Affirmative vote of a majority of members present will be necessary to find that probable cause exists. The chair will not be counted for quorum purposes and will be eligible to vote regarding the disposition of any grievance only in case of a tie among the regular voting members.

(h) Results of Grievance Committee Deliberations - If probable cause is found and the committee determines that a hearing is necessary, the chair will direct the counsel to prepare and file a complaint against the respondent. If the committee finds probable cause but determines that no hearing is necessary, it will direct the counsel to prepare for the chair's signature an admonition, reprimand, or censure. If no probable cause is found, the grievance will be dismissed or dismissed with a letter of warning or a letter of caution.

(i) Letters of Caution - If no probable cause is found but it is determined by the Grievance Committee that the conduct of the respondent is unprofessional or not in accord with accepted professional practice, the committee may issue a letter of caution to the respondent recommending that the respondent be more professional in his or her practice in one or more ways which are to be specifically identified.

(j) Letters of Warning

(1) If no probable cause is found but it is determined by the Grievance Committee that the conduct of the respondent is an unintentional, minor, or technical violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct, the committee may issue a letter of warning to the respondent. The letter of warning will advise the respondent that he or she may be subject to discipline if such conduct is continued or repeated. The letter will specify in one or more ways the conduct or practice for which the respondent is being warned. The letter of warning will not constitute discipline of the respondent.

(2) A copy of the letter of warning will be maintained in the office of the counsel for three years. If relevant, a copy of the letter of warning may be offered into evidence in any proceeding filed against the respondent before the commission within three years after the letter of warning is issued to the respondent. In every case filed against the respondent before the commission within three years after the letter of warning is issued to the respondent, the letter of warning may be introduced into evidence as an aggravating factor concerning the issue of what disciplinary sanction should be imposed. A copy of the letter of warning may be disclosed to the Grievance Committee if another grievance is filed against the respondent within three years after the letter of warning is issued to the respondent.

(3) Service of Process:

(A) If valid service upon the respondent has previously been accomplished by certified mail, personal service, publication, or acceptance of service by the respondent or the respondent's counsel, a copy of the letter of warning may be served upon the respondent by mailing a copy of the letter of warning to the respondent's last known address on file with the State Bar. Service shall be deemed complete upon deposit of the letter of warning in a postpaid, properly addressed wrapper in a post office or official depository under the exclusive care and custody of the United States Postal Service.

(B) If valid service upon the respondent has not previously been accomplished by certified mail, personal service, publication, or acceptance of service by the respondent or the respondent's counsel, a copy of the letter of warning shall be served upon the respondent by certified mail or personal service. If diligent efforts to serve the respondent by certified mail and by personal service are unsuccessful, the letter of warning shall be served by mailing a copy of the letter of warning to the respondent's last known address on file with the State Bar. Service shall be deemed complete upon deposit of the letter of warning in a postpaid, properly addressed wrapper in a post office or official depository under the exclusive care and custody of the United States Postal Service.

(4) Within 15 days after service, the respondent may refuse the letter of warning and request a hearing before the commission to determine whether the respondent violated the Rules of Professional Conduct. Such refusal and request will be in writing, addressed to the Grievance Committee, and served on the secretary

by certified mail, return receipt requested. The refusal will state that the letter of warning is refused. If the respondent does not serve a refusal and request within 15 days after service upon the respondent of the letter of warning, the letter of warning will be deemed accepted by the respondent. An extension of time may be granted by the chairperson of the Grievance Committee for good cause shown.

- (5) In cases in which the respondent refuses the letter of warning, the counsel will prepare and file a complaint against the respondent at the commission.

(k) Admonitions, Reprimands, and Censures

- (1) If probable cause is found but it is determined by the Grievance Committee that a complaint and hearing are not warranted, the committee shall issue an admonition in cases in which the respondent has committed a minor violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct, a reprimand in cases in which the respondent's conduct has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct and caused harm or potential harm to a client, the administration of justice, the profession, or members of the public, or a censure in cases in which the respondent has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct and the harm or potential harm caused by the respondent is significant and protection of the public requires more serious discipline. To determine whether more serious discipline is necessary to protect the public or whether the violation is minor and less serious discipline is sufficient to protect the public, the committee shall consider the factors delineated in subparagraphs (2) and (3) below.

- (2) Factors that shall be considered in determining whether protection of the public requires a censure include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (A) prior discipline for the same or similar conduct;
- (B) prior notification by the North Carolina State Bar of the wrongfulness of the conduct;
- (C) refusal to acknowledge wrongful nature of conduct;
- (D) lack of indication of reformation;
- (E) likelihood of repetition of misconduct;
- (F) uncooperative attitude toward disciplinary process;
- (G) pattern of similar conduct;
- (H) violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct in more than one unrelated matter;
- (I) lack of efforts to rectify consequences of conduct;
- (J) imposition of lesser discipline would fail to acknowledge the seriousness of the misconduct and would send the wrong message to members of the Bar and the public regarding the conduct expected of members of the Bar;
- (K) notification contemporaneous with the conduct at issue of the wrongful nature of the conduct and failure to take remedial action.

- (3) Factors that shall be considered in determining whether the violation of the Rules is minor and warrants issuance of an admonition include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (A) lack of prior discipline for same or similar conduct;
- (B) recognition of wrongful nature of conduct;
- (C) indication of reformation;
- (D) indication that repetition of misconduct not likely;
- (E) isolated incident;
- (F) violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct in only one matter;
- (G) lack of harm or potential harm to client, administration of justice, profession, or members of the public;
- (H) efforts to rectify consequences of conduct;
- (I) inexperience in the practice of law;
- (J) imposition of admonition appropriately acknowledges the minor nature of the violation(s) of the Rules of Professional Conduct;
- (K) notification contemporaneous with the conduct at issue of the wrongful nature of the conduct resulting in efforts to take remedial action;
- (L) personal or emotional problems contributing to the conduct at issue;
- (M) successful participation in and completion of contract with Lawyer's Assistance Program where mental health or substance abuse issues contributed to the conduct at issue.

(l) Procedures for Admonitions, Reprimands, and Censures

- (1) A record of any admonition, reprimand, or censure issued by the Grievance Committee will be maintained in the office of the secretary.

- (2)
 - (A) If valid service upon the respondent has previously been accomplished by certified mail, personal service, publication, or acceptance of service by the respondent or the respondent's counsel, a copy of the admonition, reprimand, or censure may be served upon the respondent by mailing a copy of the admonition, reprimand, or censure to the respondent's last known address on file with the State Bar. Service shall be deemed complete upon deposit of the admonition, reprimand, or censure in a postpaid, properly addressed wrapper in a post office or official depository under the exclusive care and custody of the United States Postal Service.
 - (B) If valid service upon the respondent has not previously been accomplished by certified mail, personal service, publication, or acceptance of service by the respondent or the respondent's counsel, a copy of the admonition, reprimand, or censure shall be served upon the respondent by certified mail or personal service. If diligent efforts to serve the respondent by certified mail and by personal service are unsuccessful, the respondent shall be served by mailing a copy of the admonition, reprimand, or censure to the respondent's last known address on file with the State Bar. Service shall be deemed complete upon deposit of the admonition, reprimand, or censure in a postpaid, properly addressed wrapper in a post office or official depository under the exclusive care and custody of the United States Postal Service.
- (3) Within 15 days after service the respondent may refuse the admonition, reprimand, or censure and request a hearing before the commission. Such refusal and request will be in writing, addressed to the Grievance Committee, and served upon the secretary by certified mail, return receipt requested. The refusal will state that the admonition, reprimand, or censure is refused.
- (4) If a refusal and request are not served upon the secretary within 15 days after service upon the respondent of the admonition, reprimand, or censure, the admonition, reprimand, or censure will be deemed accepted by the respondent. An extension of time may be granted by the chair of the Grievance Committee for good cause shown. A censure that is deemed accepted by the respondent must be filed as provided by Rule .0127(a)(3) of this subchapter.
- (5) In cases in which the respondent refuses an admonition, reprimand, or censure, the counsel will prepare and file a complaint against the respondent at the commission.

(m) There shall be a grievance review panel of the Grievance Committee. For each review conducted, the chair shall appoint a panel consisting of the chair, two vice-chairs, and two other members of the Grievance Committee, including one public member. The panel shall not include any member who serves on the subcommittee that was assigned to address the underlying grievance file. The chair shall serve as the chair of the panel. If the chair or either of the two vice-chairs from the other subcommittees served on the subcommittee that issued the discipline or are otherwise unable to serve on the review panel, the chair may appoint a substitute member or members of the committee to serve on the review panel in the place of the chair or in the place of such vice-chair or vice-chairs.

- (1) The panel shall have the following powers and duties:
 - (A) Upon a timely-filed written request by a grievance respondent, to review an order of public discipline issued to the respondent by the Grievance Committee.
 - (i) A written request for review must be filed with the secretary of the State Bar within 15 days of service of the public discipline upon the respondent.
 - (ii) The written request shall contain the grounds upon which the respondent believes review is warranted and may include supporting documentary evidence that has not previously been submitted to the Grievance Committee.
 - (iii) The respondent shall be entitled to be represented by legal counsel at the respondent's expense. The respondent or the respondent's legal counsel and legal counsel for the State Bar shall be entitled to appear and to present oral arguments to the panel. The panel's review shall be conducted upon the written record and oral arguments. Neither the respondent nor the State Bar may present live testimony or compel the production of books, papers, and other writings and documents in connection with a request for review. The panel may, in its discretion, question the respondent, legal counsel for the respondent, and legal counsel for the State Bar.
 - (iv) The panel shall consider the request for review, any documentation submitted in support of the request for review, and all materials that were before the Grievance Committee when it made its decision. The respondent shall be entitled to receive all material considered by the panel other than attorney-client privileged communications of the

Office of Counsel and work product of the Office of Counsel. The panel shall determine whether the public discipline issued by the Grievance Committee is appropriate in light of all material considered by the panel.

- (a) After considering the request for review, oral arguments, and the documentary record, the panel may, by majority vote, either concur in the public discipline issued by the Grievance Committee or remand the grievance file to the Grievance Committee with its recommendation for a different disposition.
 - (b) The panel shall prepare a memorandum communicating its determination to the respondent and to the Office of Counsel. The memorandum will not constitute an order and will not contain findings of fact, conclusions of law, or the rationale for the panel's determination.
 - (c) The Grievance Committee shall act upon a remand at its next regularly scheduled meeting.
 - (d) Upon remand, the Grievance Committee may affirm the public discipline that it issued or may reach a different disposition of the grievance file.
 - (e) The decision of the Grievance Committee upon remand is final, and its decision is not subject to further consideration by the Grievance Committee.
 - (f) Within 15 days after service upon the respondent of (i) the panel's memorandum concurring in the original public discipline issued by the Grievance Committee, or (ii) the Grievance Committee's final decision upon remand after review, the respondent may refuse the public discipline imposed by the Grievance Committee and request a hearing before the commission. Such refusal and request shall be in writing, addressed to the Grievance Committee, and served upon the secretary of the State Bar by certified mail, return receipt requested.
 - (v) Second or subsequent requests for review of Grievance Committee action in the same file will not be considered.
 - (vi) A request for review is in addition to and not in derogation of all procedural and substantive rights contained in the Discipline and Disability Rules of the State Bar.
- (2) All proceedings and deliberations of the panel shall be conducted in a manner and at a time and location to be determined by the chair of the Grievance Committee. Reviews may be conducted by videoconference in the discretion of the chair.
 - (3) All proceedings of the panel are closed to the public. Neither the respondent nor legal counsel for the respondent and the State Bar shall be privy to deliberations of the panel. All documents, papers, letters, recordings, electronic records, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristic, in the possession of the panel are confidential and are not public records within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes.
- (n) Disciplinary Hearing Commission Complaints - Formal complaints will be issued in the name of the North Carolina State Bar as plaintiff and signed by the chair of the Grievance Committee. Amendments to complaints may be signed by the counsel alone, with the approval of the chair of the Grievance Committee.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 3, 1999; February 3, 2000; October 8, 2009; March 27, 2019; September 25, 2020; March 19, 2025;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court October 18, 2023 and December 20, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01B .0114 PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY HEARING COMMISSION: GENERAL RULES APPLICABLE TO ALL PROCEEDINGS

- (a) Applicable Procedure - Except where specific procedures are provided by these rules, pleadings and proceedings before a hearing panel will conform as nearly as practicable with the requirements of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure and for trial of nonjury civil cases in the superior courts. Any specific procedure set out in these rules controls, and where specific procedures are set out in these rules, the Rules of Civil Procedure will be supplemental only.
- (b) Continuances - The chairperson of the hearing panel may continue any hearing for good cause shown. After a hearing has commenced, continuances will only be granted pursuant to Rule .0116(b).

(c) Appearance By or For the Defendant - The defendant may appear pro se or may be represented by counsel. The defendant may not act pro se if he or she is represented by counsel.

(1) Pro Se Defendant's Address - When a defendant appears in his or her own behalf in a proceeding, the defendant will file with the clerk, with proof of delivery of a copy to the counsel, an address at which any notice or other written communication required to be served upon the defendant may be sent, if such address differs from the address on record with the State Bar's membership department.

(2) Notice of Appearance - When a defendant is represented by an attorney in a proceeding, the attorney will file with the clerk a written notice of such appearance which will state his or her name, address and telephone number, the name and address of the defendant on whose behalf he or she appears, and the caption and docket number of the proceeding. Any additional notice or other written communication required to be served on or furnished to a defendant during the pendency of the hearing will be sent to defendant's attorney of record in lieu of transmission to the defendant.

(d) Filing Time Limits - Pleadings or other documents in formal proceedings required or permitted to be filed under these rules must be received for filing by the clerk of the commission within the time limits, if any, for such filing. The date of the receipt by the clerk, and not the date of deposit in the mail, is determinative.

(e) Form of Papers - All papers presented to the commission for filing will be on letter size paper (8 1/2 x 11 inches) with the exception of exhibits. The clerk will require a party to refile any paper that does not conform to this size.

(f) Subpoenas - The hearing panel will have the power to subpoena witnesses and compel their attendance, and to compel the production of books, papers, and other documents deemed necessary or material to any hearing as permitted in civil cases under the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure. Such process will be issued in the name of the hearing panel by its chairperson, or the chairperson may designate the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar to issue such process. The plaintiff and the defendant have the right to invoke the powers of the panel with respect to compulsory process for witnesses and for the production of books, papers, and other writings and documents.

(g) Admissibility of Evidence - In any hearing, admissibility of evidence will be governed by the rules of evidence applicable in the superior court of North Carolina at the time of the hearing. The chairperson of the hearing panel will rule on the admissibility of evidence, subject to the right of any member of the panel to question the ruling. If a member of the panel challenges a ruling relating to admissibility of evidence, the question will be decided by a majority vote of the hearing panel.

(h) Defendant as Witness - The defendant will, except as otherwise provided by law, be competent and compellable to give evidence for either party.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28; 84-28.1; 84-29; 84-30; 84-32(a);
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;*

*Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016; October 8, 2009; March 2, 2006;
December 30, 1998; October 2, 1997.*

27 NCAC 01B .0115 PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY HEARING COMMISSION: PLEADINGS AND PREHEARING PROCEDURE

(a) Complaint and Service - The counsel will file the complaint with the clerk of the commission. The counsel will cause a summons and a copy of the complaint to be served upon the defendant and will inform the clerk of the date of service. The clerk will deliver a copy of the complaint to the chairperson of the commission and will inform the chairperson of the date that service on the defendant was effected. Service of complaints and summonses and other documents or papers will be accomplished as set forth in the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure.

(b) Notice Pleading - Complaints in disciplinary actions will allege the charges with sufficient precision to clearly apprise the defendant of the conduct which is the subject of the complaint.

(c) Answer - Within 20 days after the service of the complaint, unless further time is allowed by the chairperson of the commission or of the hearing panel upon good cause shown, the defendant will file an answer to the complaint with the clerk of the commission and will serve a copy on the counsel.

(d) Designation of Hearing Panel - Within 20 days after service of the complaint upon the defendant, the chairperson of the commission will designate a hearing panel from among the commission members. The chairperson will notify the counsel and the defendant of the composition of the hearing panel.

(e) Scheduling Conference - The chairperson of the hearing panel will hold a scheduling conference with the parties within 20 days after the filing of the answer by the defendant unless another time is set by the chairperson of the commission. The chairperson of the hearing panel will notify the counsel and the defendant of the date, time, and venue (e.g., in person, telephone, video conference) of the scheduling conference. At the scheduling conference, the parties will discuss anticipated issues, amendments, motions, any settlement conference, and discovery. The chairperson of the hearing panel will set dates for

the completion of discovery and depositions, for the filing of motions, for the pre-hearing conference, for the filing of the stipulation on the pre-hearing conference, and for the hearing, and may order a settlement conference. The hearing date shall not be less than 60 days from the final date for discovery and depositions unless otherwise consented to by the parties. The chairperson of the hearing panel may impose sanctions against any party who willfully fails to participate in good faith in the scheduling conference or willfully fails to comply with a scheduling order issued pursuant to this section. The sanctions which may be imposed include but are not limited to those enumerated in Rule 37(b) of the NC Rules of Civil Procedure.

(f) Failure to File an Answer - Failure to file an answer admitting or denying the allegations of the complaint or asserting the grounds for failing to do so within the time specified by this rule will be grounds for entry of the defendant's default. If the defendant fails to file an answer to the complaint, the allegations contained in the complaint will be deemed admitted.

(g) Default

- (1) The clerk will enter the defendant's default when the fact of default is made to appear by motion of the counsel or otherwise.
- (2) The counsel may thereupon apply to the hearing panel for default orders as follows:
 - (A) For an order making findings of fact and conclusions of law. Upon such motion, the hearing panel shall enter an order making findings of fact and conclusions of law as established by the facts deemed admitted by the default. The hearing panel shall then set a date for hearing at which the sole issue shall be the discipline to be imposed.
 - (B) For an order of discipline. Upon such motion, the hearing panel shall enter an order making findings of fact and conclusions of law as established by the facts deemed admitted by the default. If such facts provide sufficient basis, the hearing panel shall enter an order imposing the discipline deemed to be appropriate. The hearing panel may, in its discretion, set a hearing date and hear such additional evidence as it deems necessary to determine appropriate discipline prior to entering the order of discipline.
- (3) For good cause shown, the hearing panel may set aside the entry of default.
- (4) After an order imposing discipline has been entered by the hearing panel upon the defendant's default, the hearing panel may set aside the order in accordance with Rule 60(b) of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure.

(h) Discovery - Discovery will be available to the parties in accordance with the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure. Any discovery undertaken must be completed by the date set in the scheduling order unless the time for discovery is extended by the chairperson of the hearing panel for good cause shown. Upon a showing of good cause, the chairperson of the hearing panel may reschedule the hearing to accommodate completion of reasonable discovery.

(i) Settlement - The parties may meet by mutual consent prior to the hearing to discuss the possibility of settlement of the case or the stipulation of any issues, facts, or matters of law. Any proposed settlement of the case will be subject to the approval of the hearing panel. The hearing panel may reject a proposed settlement agreement but only after conducting a conference with the parties. The chairperson of the hearing panel will notify the counsel and the defendant of the date, time, and venue (e.g., in person, telephone, videoconference) of the conference. If, after the conference, the first hearing panel rejects a proposed settlement, another hearing panel must be empanelled to try the case, unless all parties consent to proceed with the original hearing panel. The parties may submit a proposed settlement to a second hearing panel and may, upon the agreement of both parties, request a conference with the panel, but the parties shall not have the right to request a third hearing panel if the proposed settlement is rejected by the second hearing panel. The second hearing panel shall either accept the settlement proposal or hold a hearing upon the allegations of the complaint.

(j) Settlement Conference - Either party may request, or the chair of the hearing panel may order, appointment of a commission member to conduct a settlement conference.

- (1) Such request shall be filed with the clerk of the commission and must be made no later than 60 days prior to the date set for hearing.
- (2) Upon such request, the chairperson of the commission shall select and assign a commission member not assigned to the hearing panel in the case to conduct a settlement conference and shall notify the parties of the commission member assigned and the date by which the settlement conference must be held. The settlement conference must be no later than 30 days prior to the date set for hearing.
- (3) The commission member conducting the settlement conference will set the date, time, and manner.
- (4) At the settlement conference, the parties will discuss their positions and desired resolution and the commission member will provide input regarding the case and resolution.
- (5) The commission member's evaluation and input shall be advisory only and not binding.
- (6) All statements and/or admissions made at the settlement conference shall be for settlement purposes only and shall not be admissible at any hearing in the case. Evidence that is otherwise discoverable, however,

shall not be excluded from admission at hearing merely because it is presented in the course of the settlement conference.

(k) Prehearing Conference and Order

- (1) Unless default has been entered by the clerk, the parties shall hold a prehearing conference. The prehearing conference shall be arranged and held by the dates established in the scheduling order.
- (2) Prior to or during the prehearing conference, the parties shall: exchange witness and exhibit lists; discuss stipulations of undisputed facts; discuss the issues for determination by the hearing panel; and exchange contested issues if the parties identify differing contested issues.
- (3) Within five days after the date of the prehearing conference, each party shall provide the other with any documents or items identified as exhibits but not previously provided to the other party.
- (4) The parties shall memorialize the prehearing conference in a document titled "Stipulation on Prehearing Conference" that shall address the items and utilize the format in the sample provided to the parties by the clerk. By the date set in the scheduling order, the parties shall submit the Stipulation on Prehearing Conference to the clerk to provide to the hearing panel.
- (5) Upon five days' notice to the parties, at the discretion of the chairperson of the hearing panel, the chairperson may order the parties to meet with the chairperson or any designated member of the hearing panel for the purpose of promoting the efficiency of the hearing. The participating member of the panel shall have the power to issue such orders as may be appropriate. The venue (e.g., telephone, videoconference, in person) shall be set by the hearing panel member.
- (6) The chairperson of the hearing panel may impose sanctions against any party who willfully fails to participate in good faith in a prehearing conference or hearing or who willfully fails to comply with a prehearing order issued pursuant to this section. The sanctions which may be imposed include but are not limited to those enumerated in Rule 37(b) of the NC Rules of Procedure.
- (7) Evidence or witnesses not included in the Stipulation on Prehearing Conference may be excluded from admission or consideration at the hearing.

(l) Prehearing Motions - The chairperson of the hearing panel, without consulting the other panel members, may hear and dispose of all prehearing motions except motions the granting of which would result in dismissal of the charges or final judgment for either party. All motions which could result in dismissal of the charges or final judgment for either party will be decided by a majority of the members of the hearing panel. The following procedures shall apply to all prehearing motions, including motions which could result in dismissal of all or any of the allegations or could result in final judgment for either party on all or any claims:

- (1) Parties shall file motions with the clerk of the commission. Parties may submit motions by regular mail, overnight mail, or in person. Motions transmitted by facsimile or by email will not be accepted for filing except with the advance written permission of the chairperson of the hearing panel. Parties shall not deliver motions or other communications directly to members of the hearing panel unless expressly directed in writing to do so by the chairperson of the hearing panel.
- (2) Motions shall be served as provided in the NC Rules of Civil Procedure.
- (3) The non-moving party shall have ten days from the filing of the motion to respond. If the motion is served upon the non-moving party by regular mail only, then the non-moving party shall have 13 days from the filing of the motion to respond. Upon good cause shown, the chairperson of the hearing panel may shorten or extend the time period for response.
- (4) Any prehearing motion may be decided on the basis of the parties' written submissions. Oral argument may be allowed in the discretion of the chairperson of the hearing panel. The chairperson shall set the time, date, and manner of oral argument. The chairperson may order that argument on any prehearing motion may be heard in person or by telephone or electronic means of communication.
- (5) Any motion included in or with a defendant's answer will not be acted upon, and no response from the non-moving party will be due, unless and until a party files a notice requesting action by the deadline for filing motions set in the scheduling order. The due date for response by the non-moving party will run from the date of the filing of the notice.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted: September 22, 2016;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 28, 2017.*

27 NCAC 01B .0116 PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY HEARING COMMISSION: FORMAL HEARING

(a) Public Hearing

- (1) The defendant will appear in person before the hearing panel at the time and place named by the chairperson. The hearing will be open to the public except that for good cause shown the chairperson of the hearing panel may exclude from the hearing room all persons except the parties, counsel, and those engaged in the hearing. No hearing will be closed to the public over the objection of the defendant.
- (2) Media Coverage - Absent a showing of good cause, the chairperson of the hearing panel shall permit television, motion picture and still photography cameras, broadcast microphones and recorders (electronic media) to record and broadcast formal hearings. A media outlet shall file a motion with the clerk of the commission seeking permission to utilize electronic media to record or broadcast a hearing no less than 48 hours before the hearing is scheduled to begin. The chairperson will rule on the motion no less than 24 hours before the hearing is scheduled to begin. Any order denying a motion to permit the use of electronic media to record or broadcast a formal hearing shall contain written findings of fact setting forth the facts constituting good cause to support that decision. Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, the provisions of Rule 15 of the General Rules of Practice for the Superior and District Courts (Electronic Media and Still Photography Coverage of Public Judicial Proceedings) shall apply to electronic media coverage of hearings before the commission.

(b) Continuance After a Hearing Has Commenced - After a hearing has commenced, no continuances other than an adjournment from day to day will be granted, except to await the filing of a controlling decision of an appellate court, by consent of all parties, or where extreme hardship would result in the absence of a continuance.

(c) Burden of Proof

- (1) Unless otherwise provided in these rules, the State Bar shall have the burden of proving by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the defendant violated the Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (2) In any complaint or other pleading or in any trial, hearing, or other proceeding, the State Bar is not required to prove the nonexistence of any exemption or exception contained in the Rules of Professional Conduct. The burden of proving any exemption or exception shall be upon the person claiming its benefit.

(d) Orders - At the conclusion of any disciplinary case, the hearing panel will file an order which will include the panel's findings of fact and conclusions of law. When one or more rule violations has been established by summary judgment, the order of discipline will set out the undisputed material facts and conclusions of law established by virtue of summary judgment, any additional facts and conclusions of law pertaining to discipline, and the disposition. All final orders will be signed by the members of the panel, or by the chairperson of the panel on behalf of the panel, and will be filed with the clerk.

(e) Preservation of the Record - The clerk will ensure that a complete record is made of the evidence received during the course of all hearings before the commission as provided by G.S. 7A-95 for trials in the superior court. The clerk will preserve the record and the pleadings, exhibits, and briefs of the parties.

(f) Discipline - If the charges of misconduct are established, the hearing panel will consider any evidence relevant to the discipline to be imposed.

- (1) Suspension or disbarment is appropriate where there is evidence that the defendant's actions resulted in significant harm or potential significant harm to the clients, the public, the administration of justice, or the legal profession, and lesser discipline is insufficient to adequately protect the public. The following factors shall be considered in imposing suspension or disbarment:
 - (A) intent of the defendant to cause the resulting harm or potential harm;
 - (B) intent of the defendant to commit acts where the harm or potential harm is foreseeable;
 - (C) circumstances reflecting the defendant's lack of honesty, trustworthiness, or integrity;
 - (D) elevation of the defendant's own interest above that of the client;
 - (E) negative impact of defendant's actions on client's or public's perception of the profession;
 - (F) negative impact of the defendant's actions on the administration of justice;
 - (G) impairment of the client's ability to achieve the goals of the representation;
 - (H) effect of defendant's conduct on third parties;
 - (I) acts of dishonesty, misrepresentation, deceit, or fabrication;
 - (J) multiple instances of failure to participate in the legal profession's self-regulation process.
- (2) Disbarment shall be considered where the defendant is found to engage in:
 - (A) acts of dishonesty, misrepresentation, deceit, or fabrication;
 - (B) impulsive acts of dishonesty, misrepresentation, deceit, or fabrication without timely remedial efforts;

- (C) misappropriation or conversion of assets of any kind to which the defendant or recipient is not entitled, whether from a client or any other source; or
- (D) commission of a felony.
- (3) In all cases, any or all of the following factors shall be considered in imposing the appropriate discipline:
 - (A) prior disciplinary offenses in this state or any other jurisdiction, or the absence thereof;
 - (B) remoteness of prior offenses;
 - (C) dishonest or selfish motive, or the absence thereof;
 - (D) timely good faith efforts to make restitution or to rectify consequences of misconduct;
 - (E) indifference to making restitution;
 - (F) a pattern of misconduct;
 - (G) multiple offenses;
 - (H) effect of any personal or emotional problems on the conduct in question;
 - (I) effect of any physical or mental disability or impairment on the conduct in question;
 - (J) interim rehabilitation;
 - (K) full and free disclosure to the hearing panel or cooperative attitude toward the proceedings;
 - (L) delay in disciplinary proceedings through no fault of the defendant attorney;
 - (M) bad faith obstruction of the disciplinary proceedings by intentionally failing to comply with rules or orders of the disciplinary agency;
 - (N) submission of false evidence, false statements, or other deceptive practices during the disciplinary process;
 - (O) refusal to acknowledge wrongful nature of conduct;
 - (P) remorse;
 - (Q) character or reputation;
 - (R) vulnerability of victim;
 - (S) degree of experience in the practice of law;
 - (T) issuance of a letter of warning to the defendant within the three years immediately preceding the filing of the complaint;
 - (U) imposition of other penalties or sanctions;
 - (V) any other factors found to be pertinent to the consideration of the discipline to be imposed.

(g) Service of Final Orders - The clerk will serve the defendant with the final order of the hearing panel by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by personal service. A defendant who cannot, with reasonable diligence, be served by certified mail or personal service shall be deemed served when the clerk deposits a copy of the order enclosed in a postpaid, properly addressed wrapper in a post office or official depository under the exclusive care and custody of the United States Postal Service addressed to the defendant's last known address on file with the NC State Bar.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. September 22, 2016;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 16, 2017.*

**27 NCAC 01B .0117 PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY HEARING COMMISSION:
POSTTRIAL MOTIONS**

- (a) New Trials and Amendments of Judgments (N.C. R. Civ. 59)
 - (1) Either party may request a new trial or amendment of the hearing panel's final order, based on any of the grounds set out in Rule 59 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure.
 - (2) A motion for a new trial or amendment of judgment will be filed with the clerk no later than 20 days after service of the final order upon the defendant. Supporting affidavits, if any, and a memorandum setting forth the basis of the motion together with supporting authorities, will be filed with the motion.
 - (3) The opposing party will have 20 days from service of the motion to file a written response, any reply affidavits, and a memorandum with supporting authorities.
 - (4) The hearing panel may rule on the motion based on the parties' written submissions or may, in its discretion, order oral argument.
- (b) Relief from Judgment or Order (N.C. R. Civ. 60)
 - (1) Either party may file a motion for relief from the final judgment or order, based on any of the grounds set out in Rule 60 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure.

- (2) A motion for relief from the final judgment or order will be filed with the clerk no later than one year after service of the final order upon the defendant. Supporting affidavits, if any, and a memorandum setting forth the basis of the motion together with supporting authorities, will be filed with the motion.
- (3) The opposing party will have 20 days from service of the motion to file a written response, any reply affidavits, and a memorandum with supporting authorities.
- (4) The clerk will promptly transmit the motion and any response to the chairperson of the commission, who will appoint a hearing panel. The chairperson will appoint the members of the hearing panel that originally heard the matter wherever practicable.
- (5) The hearing panel may rule on the motion based on the parties' written submissions or may, in its discretion, order oral argument.

(c) Effect of Filing Motion - The filing of a motion requesting a new trial, amendment of the judgment, or relief from the final judgment or order under this section will not automatically stay or otherwise affect the effective date of an order of the commission.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. September 22, 2016.*

27 NCAC 01B .0118 PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY HEARING COMMISSION: STAYED SUSPENSION

(a) Procedures: Non-compliance with Conditions - In any case in which a period of suspension is stayed upon compliance by the defendant with conditions, the commission will retain jurisdiction of the matter until all conditions are satisfied. The following procedures apply during a stayed suspension:

- (1) If, during the period the stay is in effect, the counsel receives information tending to show that a condition has been violated, the counsel may, with the consent of the chairperson of the Grievance Committee, file a motion in the cause with the clerk of the commission specifying the violation and seeking an order lifting the stay and activating the suspension. The counsel will serve a copy of the motion upon the defendant.
- (2) The clerk will promptly transmit the motion to the chairperson of the commission. The chairperson will appoint a hearing panel to hold a hearing, appointing the members of the hearing panel that originally heard the matter wherever practicable. The chairperson of the commission will notify the counsel and the defendant of the composition of the hearing panel and the time and place for the hearing.
- (3) At the hearing, the State Bar will have the burden of proving by the greater weight of the evidence that the defendant violated a condition of the stay.
- (4) If the hearing panel finds by the greater weight of the evidence that the defendant violated a condition of the stay, the panel may enter an order lifting the stay and activating the suspension, or any portion thereof. Alternatively, the panel may allow the stay to remain in effect for the original term of the stay, may extend the term of the stay, and/or may include modified or additional conditions for the suspension to remain stayed. If the panel finds that the defendant violated a condition of the stay, the panel may tax the defendant with administrative fees and costs.
 - (A) In any order lifting a stay and activating a suspension in whole or in part, the panel may include a provision allowing the defendant to apply for a stay of the activated suspension on such terms and conditions as the panel concludes are appropriate.
 - (B) The panel may impose modified or additional conditions: (a) which the defendant must satisfy to obtain a stay of an activated suspension; (b) with which the defendant must comply during the stay of an activated suspension; and/or (c) which the defendant must satisfy to be reinstated to active status at the end of the activated suspension period.
 - (C) If the panel activated the entire period of suspension, in order to be reinstated at the end of the activated suspension, the defendant must comply with the requirements of Rule .0129(b) of this Subchapter and with any requirements imposed in previous orders entered by the commission.
 - (D) If the panel activated only a portion of the suspension, in order to be returned to active status at the end of the period of activated suspension the defendant must file a motion with the commission seeking a stay of the remainder of the original term of suspension. If the defendant is granted a stay of the remainder of the original term of suspension, the panel may impose modified and/or additional conditions with which the defendant must comply during the stayed suspension.
- (5) If the panel finds that the greater weight of the evidence does not establish that the defendant violated a condition of the stay, it will enter an order continuing the stay.

- (6) In any event, the panel will include in its order findings of fact and conclusions of law in support of its decision.
- (b) Completion of Stayed Suspension; Continuation of Stay if Motion Alleging Lack of Compliance is Pending
 - (1) Unless there is pending a motion or proceeding in which it is alleged that the defendant failed to comply with the conditions of the stay, the defendant's obligations under an order of discipline end upon expiration of the period of the stay.
 - (2) When the period of the stay of the suspension would otherwise have terminated, if a motion or proceeding is pending in which it is alleged that the defendant failed to comply with the conditions of the stay, the commission retains jurisdiction to lift the stay and activate all or any part of the suspension. The defendant's obligation to comply with the conditions of the existing stay remains in effect until any such pending motion or proceeding is resolved.
- (c) Applying for Stay of Suspension - The following procedures apply to a motion to stay a suspension:
 - (1) The defendant shall file a motion for stay with the clerk and serve a copy of the motion and all attachments upon the counsel. Such motion shall be filed no earlier than 60 days before the first date of eligibility to apply for a stay. The commission will not consider any motion filed earlier than 60 days before the first date of eligibility to apply for a stay. The commission will not consider any motion unless it is delivered to the clerk and served upon the counsel contemporaneously.
 - (2) The motion must identify each condition for stay and state how the defendant has met each condition. The defendant shall attach supporting documentation establishing compliance with each condition. The defendant has the burden of proving compliance with each condition by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence.
 - (3) The counsel shall have 30 days after the motion is filed to file a response.
 - (4) The clerk shall transmit the motion and the counsel's response to the chairperson of the commission. Within 14 days of transmittal of the motion and the response, the chairperson shall issue an order appointing a hearing panel and setting the date, time, and location for the hearing. Wherever practicable, the chairperson shall appoint the members of the hearing panel that entered the order of discipline.
- (d) Hearing on Motion for Stay
 - (1) The defendant bears the burden of proving compliance with all conditions for a stay by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence.
 - (2) Any hearing on a motion for stay will conform as nearly as practicable with the requirements of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure and for trials of nonjury civil causes in the superior courts.
 - (3) The decision to grant or deny a defendant's motion to stay a suspension is discretionary. The panel should consider whether the defendant has complied with Rule .0128 and Rule .0129 of this Subchapter, and any conditions in the order of discipline, as well as whether reinstatement of the defendant will cause harm or potential harm to clients, the profession, the public, or the administration of justice.
- (e) Order on the Motion for Stay - The hearing panel will determine whether the defendant has established compliance with all conditions for a stay by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence. The panel must enter an order including findings of fact and conclusions of law. The panel may impose modified and/or additional conditions: (a) for the suspension to remain stayed; (b) for eligibility for a stay during the suspension; and/or (c) for reinstatement to active status at the end of the suspension period. The panel may tax costs and administrative fees in connection with the motion.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. September 22, 2016.

27 NCAC 01B .0119 EFFECT OF A FINDING OF GUILT IN ANY CRIMINAL CASE

- (a) Conclusive Evidence of Guilt - A certified copy of the conviction of a member for any crime or a certified copy of a judgment entered against a member in which a plea of guilty, nolo contendere, or no contest has been accepted by a court will be conclusive evidence of guilt of that crime in any disciplinary proceeding instituted against a member. For purposes of any disciplinary proceeding against a member, such conviction or judgment conclusively establishes all elements of the criminal offense and conclusively establishes all facts set out in the document charging the member with the criminal offense.
- (b) Interim Suspension - Any member who has been convicted of, pleads guilty to, pleads no contest to, or is found guilty by a jury of a criminal offense showing professional unfitness in any state or federal court may be suspended from the practice of law as set out below.
 - (1) The counsel shall file with the clerk of the commission and serve upon the member a motion for interim suspension accompanied by proof of the conviction, plea, or verdict.

- (2) The member shall have ten days in which to file a response.
 - (3) The chairperson of the commission may hold a hearing to determine whether the criminal offense is one showing professional unfitness and whether, in the chairperson's discretion, interim suspension is warranted. In determining whether interim suspension is warranted, the chairperson may consider harm or potential harm to a client, the administration of justice, the profession, or members of the public, and impact on the public's perception of the profession. The parties may present additional evidence pertaining to harm or to the circumstances surrounding the offense, but the member may not collaterally attack the conviction, plea or verdict.
 - (4) The chairperson shall issue an order containing findings of fact and conclusions of law addressing whether there is a qualifying conviction, plea, or verdict, and whether interim suspension is warranted, and either granting or denying the motion.
 - (5) If the member consents to entry of an order of interim suspension, the parties may submit a consent order of interim suspension to the chairperson of the commission.
 - (6) The provisions of Rule .0128(c) of this subchapter will apply to the interim suspension.
- (c) When Conviction is Expunged, Overturned or Otherwise Eliminated -
- (1) Any request for relief as a result of an expunction of any kind shall be made under the provisions of this rule, including but not limited to expunctions of convictions, expunctions from dismissals of charges or findings of not guilty, and expunctions related to prayer for judgment continued and conditional discharges.
 - (2) Definitions.
 - (A) "Expunged action" refers to the thing expunged, which may include but is not limited to a conviction, a judgment entered against a member in which the member is adjudged guilty of a criminal offense, a judgment entered against a member in which a plea of guilty, nolo contendere, or no contest was accepted by the court, a charge dismissed or otherwise resolved pursuant to a prayer for judgment disposition, or a charge dismissed pursuant to a conditional discharge disposition.
 - (B) An order of discipline or other disciplinary action issued by the Grievance Committee or the commission ("the discipline") is based solely upon a conviction or other expunged action when there is no evidence in the record before the body that issued the discipline other than documentation of the conviction or expunged action.
 - (C) Any admissions of the member contained in a consent order of discipline entered by the commission and signed by the member or an affidavit surrendering the member's law license constitute evidence in the record other than documentation of the conviction or expunged action.
 - (3) Discipline Based Solely Upon Conviction or Expunged Action.
 - (A) If discipline was imposed upon a member based solely upon a conviction or expunged action and the conviction or expunged action is reversed, vacated, expunged, or otherwise eliminated, the discipline shall be vacated.
 - (B) The State Bar may initiate another disciplinary proceeding against the member alleging rule violations and seeking imposition of discipline based upon the facts or events underlying the conviction or expunged action.
 - (4) Discipline Based in Part Upon Conviction or Expunged Action. If discipline was imposed upon a member based in part upon a conviction or expunged action and the conviction or expunged action is reversed, vacated, expunged, or otherwise eliminated, the member may petition the body that issued the discipline for one of the following forms of relief:
 - (A) Redaction. All references to the conviction, charges, and/or expunged action redacted from the original discipline.
 - (B) Substituted Discipline. All references to the conviction, charges, and/or expunged action omitted in a substituted discipline identical in all other respects to the original discipline. Substituted discipline will be entered nunc pro tunc to the date of entry of the original discipline and will have the same effective date as the original discipline. Substituted discipline will reflect the filing date on which the substituted discipline is entered.
 - (C) Modified Discipline. When the original discipline was not a consent order of discipline entered by the commission and signed by the member, the member may seek an order replacing the original discipline with modified discipline imposing a different disposition and omitting all references to the conviction, charges, and/or expunged action. Modified discipline will be entered nunc pro tunc to the date of entry of the original discipline and will have the same effective date as the

original discipline. Modified discipline will reflect the filing date on which the modified discipline is entered.

- (5) Procedures.
- (A) A member may petition the body that issued the original discipline for relief under this section. The petition must be served simultaneously upon the counsel. If the action that eliminated the conviction is sealed or otherwise not public record, the member may file the petition under seal without seeking leave to do so. The petition shall be accompanied by documentation of the action that eliminated the conviction or expunged action, and shall specify which form of relief the member seeks. If the member seeks relief under section (c)(4)(A) or (c)(4)(B) above, the petition shall include proposed redacted or substituted discipline.
 - (B) The State Bar shall have 30 days from receipt of the petition to file a written response, which must be served simultaneously upon the member. If the petition was filed under seal, the response shall be filed under seal. If the member seeks relief under section (c)(4)(A) or (c)(4)(B) above, the response (i) shall indicate whether the State Bar consents to the redacted or substituted discipline proposed by the member or (ii) shall include redacted or substituted discipline proposed by the State Bar.
 - (C) When the original discipline was issued by the Grievance Committee, the counsel shall forward to the Grievance Committee within 40 days of the date of service of the petition upon the counsel (i) the member's petition for relief and accompanying supporting documentation, (ii) the State Bar's response, and (iii) the evidence considered by the Grievance Committee when it issued the original discipline.
 - (D) When the original discipline was issued by the commission after a hearing, the member shall obtain a transcript of the hearing at the member's sole expense. The member shall provide official copies of the transcript to the commission and to the counsel within 90 days of the date of the petition. For good cause shown, the commission may enlarge the time for provision of the transcript. If the member does not timely provide official copies of the transcript to the commission and to the counsel, the member will be ineligible for the relief described in section (c)(4)(C).
 - (E) Consideration and Action.
 - (i) Grievance Committee - The Grievance Committee will not consider new evidence. The committee will take action on the petition at its next available quarterly meeting occurring at least two weeks after the materials required by section (c)(5)(C) above were forwarded to the committee. The Grievance Committee will consider the matter, determine whether the discipline was based in whole or in part upon the conviction or expunged action, and take action as set forth in sections (c)(3) and (c)(4) above.
 - (ii) Commission - The commission will not consider new evidence. Upon receipt of the petition and response, the chairperson of the commission will appoint a hearing panel. If the original discipline was issued after a hearing, within thirty days of appointment of the hearing panel the clerk will ensure the hearing panel has the exhibits that were entered into evidence and a list of witnesses who testified at the original hearing. In a case to which (c)(5)(D) applies, the hearing panel will not consider the petition until the member has provided the transcript to the hearing panel and to the counsel or until the time has run for the transcript to be provided. The hearing panel will consider the matter, determine whether the discipline was based in whole or in part upon the conviction or expunged action, and will take action as set forth in sections (c)(3) and (c)(4) above. The hearing panel will enter an order containing findings of fact and conclusions of law and ordering the action to be taken. The order will be entered under seal if the petition seeking relief was filed under seal.
 - (F) Expunged Action Referenced in Public Commission Records. Upon relief granted by the commission as set forth above, the commission shall also redact from all public commission records any reference to the expunged action.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;*

Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: November 7, 1996; March 6, 1997; December 30, 1998; February 3, 2000; September 22, 2016;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court March 1, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01B .0120 RECIPROCAL DISCIPLINE AND DISABILITY PROCEEDINGS

(a) Notice to Secretary - All members who have been disciplined in any state or federal court for a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct in effect in such state or federal court or who have been transferred to disability inactive status or its equivalent by any state or federal court will inform the secretary of such action in writing no later than 30 days after entry of the order of discipline or transfer to disability inactive status. Failure to make the report required in this paragraph may subject the member to professional discipline as set out in Rule 8.3 of the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct.

(b) Administration of Reciprocal Discipline - Except as provided in Paragraph (c) of this Rule which applies to disciplinary proceedings in certain federal courts, reciprocal discipline and disability proceedings will be administered as follows:

- (1) Notice and Challenge - Upon receipt of a certified copy of an order demonstrating that a member has been disciplined or transferred to disability inactive status or its equivalent in another jurisdiction, state or federal, the Grievance Committee will forthwith issue a notice directed to the member containing a copy of the order from the other jurisdiction and an order directing that the member inform the committee within 30 days from service of the notice of any claim by the member that the imposition of the identical discipline or an order transferring the member to disability inactive status in this state would be unwarranted and the reasons therefor. This notice is to be served on the member in accordance with the provisions of Rule 4 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure.
- (2) Effect of Stay - If the discipline or transfer order imposed in the other jurisdiction has been stayed, any reciprocal discipline or transfer to disability inactive status imposed in this state will be deferred until such stay expires.
- (3) Imposition of Discipline - Upon the expiration of 30 days from service of the notice issued pursuant to the provisions of Rule .0120(b)(1) above, the chairperson of the Grievance Committee will impose the identical discipline or enter an order transferring the member to disability inactive status unless the Grievance Committee concludes:
 - (A) that the procedure was so lacking in notice or opportunity to be heard as to constitute a deprivation of due process; or
 - (B) there was such an infirmity of proof establishing the misconduct as to give rise to the clear conviction that the Grievance Committee could not, consistent with its duty, accept as final the conclusion on that subject; or
 - (C) that the imposition of the same discipline would result in grave injustice; or
 - (D) that the misconduct established warrants substantially different discipline in this state; or
 - (E) that the reason for the original transfer to disability inactive status no longer exists.
- (4) Dismissal - Where the Grievance Committee determines that any of the elements listed in Rule .0120(b)(3) above exist, the committee will dismiss the case or direct that a complaint be filed.
- (5) Effect of Final Adjudication in Another Jurisdiction - If the elements listed in Rule .0120(b)(3) above are found not to exist, a final adjudication in another jurisdiction that an attorney has been guilty of misconduct or should be transferred to disability inactive status will establish the misconduct or disability for purposes of reciprocal discipline or disability proceedings in this state.

(c) Reciprocal Discipline in the District of North Carolina, Fourth Circuit, or US Supreme Court - Reciprocal discipline with certain federal courts will be administered as follows:

- (1) Notice and Challenge - Upon receipt of a certified copy of an order demonstrating that a member has been disciplined in a United States District Court in North Carolina, in the United States Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, or in the United States Supreme Court, the chairperson of the Grievance Committee will forthwith issue a notice directed to the member. The notice will contain a copy of the order from the court and an order directing the member to inform the committee within 10 days from service of the notice whether the member will accept reciprocal discipline which is substantially similar to that imposed by the federal court. This notice is to be served on the member in accordance with the provisions of Rule 4 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure. The member will have 30 days from service of the notice to file a written challenge with the committee on the grounds that the imposition of discipline by the North Carolina State Bar would be unwarranted because the facts found in the federal disciplinary proceeding do not involve conduct which violates the North Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct. If the member notifies

the North Carolina State Bar within 10 days after service of the notice that he or she accepts reciprocal discipline which is substantially similar to that imposed by the federal court, substantially similar discipline will be ordered as provided in Rule .0120(c)(2) below and will run concurrently with the discipline ordered by the federal court.

- (2) Acceptance of Reciprocal Discipline - If the member notifies the North Carolina State Bar of his or her acceptance of reciprocal discipline as provided in Rule .0120(c)(1) above the chairperson of the Grievance Committee will execute an order of discipline which is of a type permitted by these rules and which is substantially similar to that ordered by the federal court and will cause said order to be served upon the member.
- (3) Effect of Stay - If the discipline imposed by the federal court has been stayed, any reciprocal discipline imposed by the North Carolina State Bar will be deferred until such stay expires.
- (4) Imposition of Discipline - Upon the expiration of 30 days from service of the notice issued pursuant to the provisions of Rule .0120(c)(1) above, the chairperson of the Grievance Committee will enter an order of reciprocal discipline imposing substantially similar discipline of a type permitted by these Rules to be effective throughout North Carolina unless the member requests a hearing before the Grievance Committee and at such hearing:
 - (A) the member demonstrates that the facts found in the federal disciplinary proceeding did not involve conduct which violates the North Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct, in which event the case will be dismissed; or
 - (B) the Grievance Committee determines that the discipline imposed by the federal court is not of a type described in Rule .0127(a) of this subchapter and, therefore, cannot be imposed by the North Carolina State Bar, in which event the Grievance Committee may dismiss the case or direct that a complaint be filed in the commission.
- (5) Federal Findings of Fact - All findings of fact in the federal disciplinary proceeding will be binding upon the North Carolina State Bar and the member.
- (6) Discipline Imposed by Other Federal Courts - Discipline imposed by any other federal court will be administered as provided in Rule .0120(b) above.

(d) Imposition of Discipline - If the member fails to accept reciprocal discipline as provided in Rule .0120(c) above or if a hearing is held before the Grievance Committee under either Rule .0120(b) above or Rule .0120(c) above and the committee orders the imposition of reciprocal discipline, such discipline will run from the date of service of the final order of the chairperson of the Grievance Committee unless the committee expressly provides otherwise.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016; December 30, 1998; March 7, 1996.*

27 NCAC 01B .0121 SURRENDER OF LICENSE WHILE UNDER INVESTIGATION

(a) Surrender of License to the Council - A member who is the subject of an investigation into allegations of misconduct, but against whom no formal complaint has been filed before the commission may tender his or her license to practice by delivering to the secretary for transmittal to the council an affidavit stating that the member desires to resign and that

- (1) the resignation is freely and voluntarily rendered, is not the result of coercion or duress, and the member is fully aware of the implications of submitting the resignation;
- (2) the member is aware that there is presently pending an investigation or other proceedings regarding allegations that the member has been guilty of misconduct, the nature of which will specifically be set forth;
- (3) the member acknowledges that the material facts upon which the grievance is predicated are true;
- (4) the resignation is being submitted because the member knows that if charges were predicated upon the misconduct under investigation, the member could not successfully defend against them.

(b) Acceptance of Resignation - The council may accept a member's resignation only if the affidavit required under Rule .0121(a) above satisfies the requirements stated therein and the member has provided to the North Carolina State Bar all documents and financial records required to be kept pursuant to the Rules of Professional Conduct and requested by the counsel. If the council accepts a member's resignation, it will enter an order disbaring the member. The order of disbarment is effective on the date the council accepts the member's resignation.

(c) Public Record - The order disbaring the member and the affidavit required under Rule .0121(a) above are matters of public record.

(d) Consent to Disbarment Before the Commission - If a defendant against whom a formal complaint has been filed before the commission wishes to consent to disbarment, the defendant may do so by filing an affidavit with the chairperson of the commission. If the chairperson determines that the affidavit meets the requirements set out in .0121(a)(1), (2), (3), and (4) above, the chairperson will accept the surrender and issue an order of disbarment. The order of disbarment becomes effective upon entry of the order with the secretary. If the affidavit does not meet the requirements set out above, the consent to disbarment will not be accepted and the disciplinary complaint will be heard pursuant to Rule .0114 to Rule .0118 of this subchapter.

(e) Wind-Down Period - After a member tenders his or her license or consents to disbarment under this section the member may not undertake any new legal matters. The member may complete any legal matters which were pending on the date of the tender of the affidavit or consent to disbarment which can be completed within 30 days of the tender or consent. The member has 30 days from the date on which the member tenders the affidavit of surrender or consent to disbarment in which to comply with all of the duties set out in Rule .0128 of this subchapter.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28; 84-32(b);
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016; March 2, 2006.*

27 NCAC 01B .0122 DISABILITY

(a) Transfer by Secretary where Member Judicially Declared Incompetent. Where a member of the North Carolina State Bar has been judicially declared incapacitated, incompetent, or mentally ill by a North Carolina court or by a court of any other jurisdiction, the secretary, upon proper proof of such declaration, will enter an order transferring the member to disability inactive status effective immediately and for an indefinite period until further order of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission. A copy of the order transferring the member to disability inactive status will be served upon the member, the member's guardian, or the director of any institution to which the member is committed.

(b) Transfer to Disability Inactive Status by Consent. The chairperson of the Grievance Committee may transfer a member to disability inactive status upon consent of the member and the counsel.

(c) Initiation of Disability Proceeding

(1) Disability Proceeding Initiated by the North Carolina State Bar

(A) Evidence a Member has Become Disabled. When the North Carolina State Bar obtains evidence that a member has become disabled, the Grievance Committee will conduct an inquiry which substantially complies with the procedures set forth in Rule .0113 (a)-(h) of this subchapter. The Grievance Committee will determine whether there is probable cause to believe that the member is disabled within the meaning of Rule .0103(19) of this subchapter. If the Grievance Committee finds probable cause, the counsel will file with the commission a complaint in the name of the North Carolina State Bar, signed by the chairperson of the Grievance Committee, alleging disability. The chairperson of the commission shall appoint a hearing panel to determine whether the member is disabled.

(B) Disability Proceeding Initiated While Disciplinary Proceeding is Pending. If, during the pendency of a disciplinary proceeding, the counsel receives evidence constituting probable cause to believe the defendant is disabled within the meaning of Rule .0103(19) of this subchapter, the chairperson of the Grievance Committee may authorize the counsel to file a motion seeking a determination that the defendant is disabled and seeking the defendant's transfer to disability inactive status. The hearing panel appointed to hear the disciplinary proceeding will hear the disability proceeding.

(C) Pleading in the Alternative. When the Grievance Committee has found probable cause to believe a member has committed professional misconduct and the Grievance Committee or the chairperson of the Grievance Committee has found probable cause to believe the member is disabled, the State Bar may file a complaint seeking, in the alternative, the imposition of professional discipline for professional misconduct or a determination that the defendant is disabled.

(2) Initiated by Hearing Panel During Disciplinary Proceeding. If, during the pendency of a disciplinary proceeding, a majority of the members of the hearing panel find probable cause to believe that the defendant is disabled, the panel will, on its own motion, enter an order staying the disciplinary proceeding until the question of disability can be determined. The hearing panel will instruct the Office of Counsel of the State Bar to file a complaint alleging disability. The chairperson of the commission will appoint a new

hearing panel to hear the disability proceeding. If the new panel does not find the defendant disabled, the disciplinary proceeding will resume before the original hearing panel.

- (3) Disability Proceeding where Defendant Alleges Disability in Disciplinary Proceeding. If, during the course of a disciplinary proceeding, the defendant contends that he or she is disabled within the meaning of Rule .0103(19) of this subchapter, the defendant will be immediately transferred to disability inactive status pending conclusion of a disability hearing. The disciplinary proceeding will be stayed pending conclusion of the disability hearing. The hearing panel appointed to hear the disciplinary proceeding will hear the disability proceeding.

(d) Disability Hearings

- (1) Burden of Proof
 - (A) In any disability proceeding initiated by the State Bar or by the commission, the State Bar bears the burden of proving the defendant's disability by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence.
 - (B) In any disability proceeding initiated by the defendant, the defendant bears the burden of proving the defendant's disability by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence.
- (2) Procedure. The disability hearing will be conducted in the same manner as a disciplinary proceeding under Rule .0114 to .0118 of this subchapter. The North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure and the North Carolina Rules of Evidence apply, unless a different or more specific procedure is specified in these rules. The hearing will be open to the public.
- (3) Medical Examination. The hearing panel may require the member to undergo psychiatric, physical, or other medical examination or testing by qualified medical experts selected or approved by the hearing panel.
- (4) Appointment of Counsel. The hearing panel may appoint a lawyer to represent the defendant in a disability proceeding if the hearing panel concludes that justice so requires.
- (5) Order
 - (A) When Disability is Proven. If the hearing panel finds that the defendant is disabled, the panel will enter an order continuing the defendant's disability inactive status or transferring the defendant to disability inactive status. An order transferring the defendant to disability inactive status is effective when it is entered. A copy of the order shall be served upon the defendant or the defendant's guardian or lawyer of record.
 - (B) When Disability is Not Proven. When the hearing panel finds that it has not been proven by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the defendant is disabled, the hearing panel shall enter an order so finding. If the defendant had been transferred to disability inactive status pursuant to paragraph (c)(3) of this rule, the order shall also terminate the defendant's disability inactive status.

(e) Stay/Resumption of Pending Disciplinary Matters

- (1) Stay or Abatement. When a member is transferred to disability inactive status, any proceeding then pending before the Grievance Committee or the commission against the member shall be stayed or abated unless and until the member's disability inactive status is terminated.
- (2) Preservation of Evidence. When a disciplinary proceeding against a member has been stayed because the member has been transferred to disability inactive status, the counsel may continue to investigate allegations of misconduct. The counsel may seek orders from the chairperson of the commission, or the chairperson of a hearing panel if one has been appointed, to preserve evidence of any alleged professional misconduct by the member, including orders which permit the taking of depositions. The chairperson of the commission, or the chairperson of a hearing panel if one has been appointed, may appoint counsel to represent the member when necessary to protect the interests of the member during the preservation of evidence.
- (3) Termination of Disability Inactive Status. Upon termination of disability inactive status, all disciplinary proceedings pending against the member shall resume. The State Bar may immediately pursue any disciplinary proceedings that were pending when the member was transferred to disability inactive status and any allegations of professional misconduct that came to the State Bar's attention while the member was in disability inactive status. Any disciplinary proceeding pending before the commission that had been stayed shall be set for hearing by the chairperson of the commission.

(f) Fees and Costs. The hearing panel may direct the member to pay the costs of the disability proceeding, including the cost of any medical examination and the fees of any lawyer appointed to represent the member.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28(g); 84-28.1; 84-29; 84-30;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016; March 8, 2013; October 8, 2009;
March 6, 2002; March 5, 1998.

27 NCAC 01B .0123 ENFORCEMENT OF POWERS

In addition to the other powers contained herein, in proceedings before any subcommittee or panel of the Grievance Committee or the commission, if any person refuses to respond to a subpoena, refuses to take the oath or affirmation as a witness or thereafter refuses to be examined, refuses to obey any order in aid of discovery, or refuses to obey any lawful order of the panel contained in its decision rendered after hearing, the counsel or secretary may apply to the appropriate court for an order directing that person to comply by taking the requisite action.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28(i);
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016; October 8, 2009.

27 NCAC 01B .0124 NOTICE TO MEMBER OF ACTION AND DISMISSAL

In every disciplinary case wherein the respondent has received a letter of notice and the grievance has been dismissed, the respondent will be notified of the dismissal by a letter by the chairperson of the Grievance Committee. The chairperson will have discretion to give similar notice to the respondent in cases wherein a letter of notice has not been issued but the chairperson deems such notice to be appropriate.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016.

27 NCAC 01B .0125 NOTICE TO COMPLAINANT

- (a) Notice of Public Discipline - If the Grievance Committee finds probable cause and imposes public written discipline, the chairperson of the Grievance Committee will notify the complainant of the action of the committee.
- (b) Referral to Disciplinary Commission Hearing - If the Grievance Committee finds probable cause and refers the matter to the commission, the Office of Counsel will advise the complainant that the grievance was considered by the Committee and referred to the commission for hearing.
- (c) Notice of Dismissal or Private Resolution - If the Grievance Committee dismisses a grievance, dismisses a grievance with a letter of warning or letter of caution, finds probable cause and imposes a private admonition, or offers the respondent the opportunity to participate in a deferral program, the chairperson of the Grievance Committee will notify the complainant that the grievance was considered by the Committee and has been resolved privately, either by dismissal, deferral, or private action.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 20, 2025; September 22, 2016; March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01B .0126 APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL TO PROTECT CLIENTS' INTERESTS WHEN ATTORNEY DISAPPEARS, DIES, OR IS TRANSFERRED TO DISABILITY INACTIVE STATUS

- (a) Appointment by Senior Resident Judge - Whenever a member of the North Carolina State Bar has been transferred to disability inactive status, disappears, or dies and no partner or other member of the North Carolina State Bar capable of protecting the interests of the attorney's clients is known to exist, the senior resident judge of the superior court in the district of the member's most recent address on file with the North Carolina State Bar, if it is in this state, will be requested by the secretary to appoint an attorney or attorneys to inventory the files of the member and to take action to protect the interests of the member and his or her clients.
- (b) Disclosure of Client Information - Any member so appointed will not be permitted to disclose any information contained in any files inventoried without the consent of the client to whom such files relate except as necessary to carry out the order of the court which appointed the attorney to make such inventory.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28(j);

*Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016.*

**27 NCAC 01B .0127 IMPOSITION OF DISCIPLINE; FINDINGS OF INCAPACITY OR DISABILITY;
NOTICE TO COURTS**

(a) Imposition of Discipline - Upon the final determination of a disciplinary proceeding wherein discipline is imposed, one of the following actions will be taken:

- (1) Admonition - An admonition will be prepared by the chairperson of the Grievance Committee or the chairperson of the hearing panel depending upon the agency ordering the admonition. The admonition will be served upon the defendant. An admonition imposed by the Grievance Committee will not be recorded in the judgment docket of the North Carolina State Bar and will not be a public document. An order of admonition imposed by the commission will be a public document.
- (2) Reprimand - The chairperson of the Grievance Committee or chairperson of the hearing panel depending upon the body ordering the discipline, will file an order of reprimand with the secretary, who will record the order on the judgment docket of the North Carolina State Bar and will forward a copy to the complainant.
- (3) Censure, suspension, or Disbarment - The chairperson of the hearing panel will file the censure, order of suspension, or disbarment with the secretary, who will record the order on the judgment docket of the North Carolina State Bar and will forward a copy to the complainant. The secretary will also cause a certified copy of the order to be entered upon the judgment docket of the superior court of the county of the defendant's last known address and of any county where the defendant maintains an office. A copy of the censure, order of suspension, or disbarment will also be sent to the North Carolina Court of Appeals, the North Carolina Supreme Court, the United States District Courts in North Carolina, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, and to the United States Supreme Court. Censures imposed by the Grievance Committee will be filed by the panel chairperson with the secretary. Notice of the censure will be given to the complainant and to the courts in the same manner as censures imposed by the commission.

(b) Notification of Incapacity or Disability and Transfer to Disability Inactive Status - Upon the final determination of incapacity or disability, the chairperson of the hearing panel or the secretary, depending upon the agency entering the order, will file with the secretary a copy of the order transferring the member to disability inactive status. The secretary will cause a certified copy of the order to be entered upon the judgment docket of the superior court of the county of the disabled member's last address on file with the North Carolina State Bar and any county where the disabled member maintains an office and will forward a copy of the order to the courts referred to in Rule .0127(a)(3) above.

*History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-32(a);
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 20, 2025; September 22, 2016; October 8, 2009;
November 7, 1996.*

27 NCAC 01B .0128 OBLIGATIONS OF DISBARRED OR SUSPENDED ATTORNEYS

(a) Client Notification - A disbarred or suspended member of the North Carolina State Bar will promptly notify by certified mail, return receipt requested, all clients being represented in pending matters of the disbarment or suspension, the reasons for the disbarment or suspension, and consequent inability of the member to act as an attorney after the effective date of disbarment or suspension and will advise such clients to seek legal advice elsewhere. The written notice must be received by the client before a disbarred or suspended attorney enters into any agreement with or on behalf of any client to settle, compromise or resolve any claim, dispute or lawsuit of the client. The disbarred or suspended attorney will take reasonable steps to avoid foreseeable prejudice to the rights of his or her clients, including promptly delivering all file materials and property to which the clients are entitled to the clients or the clients' substituted attorney. No disbarred or suspended attorney will transfer active client files containing confidential information or property to another attorney, nor may another attorney receive such files or property, without prior written permission from the client.

(b) Withdrawal - The disbarred or suspended member will withdraw from all pending administrative or litigation matters before the effective date of the suspension or disbarment and will follow all applicable laws and disciplinary rules regarding the manner of withdrawal.

(c) Effective Date - In cases not governed by Rule .0121 of this subchapter, orders imposing suspension or disbarment will be effective 30 days after being served upon the defendant. In such cases, after entry of the disbarment or suspension order, the disbarred or suspended attorney will not accept any new retainer or engage as attorney for another in any new case or legal

matter of any nature. However, between the entry date of the order and its effective date, the member may complete, on behalf of any client, matters which were pending on the entry date and which can be completed before the effective date of the order.

(d) Affidavit Showing Compliance with Order - Within 10 days after the effective date of the disbarment or suspension order, the disbarred or suspended attorney will file with the secretary an affidavit showing that he or she has fully complied with the provisions of the order, with the provisions of this Section, and with the provisions of all other state, federal, and administrative jurisdictions to which he or she is admitted to practice. The affidavit will also set forth the residence or other address of the disbarred or suspended member to which communications may thereafter be directed.

(e) Records of Compliance - The disbarred or suspended member will keep and maintain records of the various steps taken under this Section so that, upon any subsequent proceeding, proof of compliance with this Section and with the disbarment or suspension order will be available. Proof of compliance with this section will be a condition precedent to consideration of any petition for reinstatement.

(f) Contempt - A suspended or disbarred attorney who fails to comply with Rules .0128(a) - (e) above may be subject to an action for contempt instituted by the appropriate authority. Failure to comply with the requirements of Rule .0128(a) above will be grounds for appointment of counsel pursuant to Rule .0126 of this subchapter.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016; March 6, 1997.*

27 NCAC 01B .0129 REINSTATEMENT

(a) After Disbarment

- (1) Reinstatement Procedure and Costs - A person who has been disbarred may have his or her license restored upon a verified petition for reinstatement, a hearing before a hearing panel of the commission, and entry of an order of reinstatement by the council as provided herein. The hearing will commence only if security for the costs of such hearing has been deposited by the petitioner with the secretary in an amount not to exceed \$500.00.
- (2) Time Limits - A disbarred lawyer may petition for reinstatement upon the expiration of at least five years from the effective date of the disbarment.
- (3) Burden of Proof and Elements to be Proved - The petitioner will have the burden of proving by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that
 - (A) not more than six months or less than 60 days before filing the petition for reinstatement, a notice of intent to seek reinstatement has been published by the petitioner in an official publication of the North Carolina State Bar. The notice will inform members of the Bar about the application for reinstatement and will request that all interested individuals file with the secretary notice of opposition to or concurrence with the petition within 60 days after the date of publication;
 - (B) not more than six months or less than 60 days before filing the petition for reinstatement, the petitioner has notified the complainant(s) in the disciplinary proceeding which led to the lawyer's disbarment of the notice of intent to seek reinstatement. The notice will specify that each complainant has 60 days from the date of publication in which to file with the secretary notice of opposition to or concurrence with the petition;
 - (C) the petitioner has reformed and presently possesses the moral qualifications required for admission to practice law in this state taking into account the gravity of the misconduct which resulted in the order of disbarment;
 - (D) permitting the petitioner to resume the practice of law within the state will not be detrimental to the integrity and standing of the bar, to the administration of justice, or to the public interest, taking into account the gravity of the misconduct which resulted in the order of disbarment;
 - (E) the petitioner's citizenship has been restored if the petitioner has been convicted of or sentenced for the commission of a felony;
 - (F) the petitioner has complied with Rule .0128 of this subchapter;
 - (G) the petitioner has complied with all applicable orders of the commission and the council;
 - (H) the petitioner has complied with the orders and judgments of any court relating to the matters resulting in the disbarment;
 - (I) the petitioner has not engaged in the unauthorized practice of law during the period of disbarment;

- (J) the petitioner has not engaged in any conduct during the period of disbarment constituting grounds for discipline under G.S. 84-28(b);
 - (K) the petitioner understands the current Rules of Professional Conduct. Participation in continuing legal education programs in ethics and professional responsibility for each of the three years preceding the petition date may be considered on the issue of the petitioner's understanding of the Rules of Professional Conduct. Such evidence creates no presumption that the petitioner has met the burden of proof established by this section;
 - (L) the petitioner has reimbursed the Client Security Fund of the North Carolina State Bar for all sums, including costs other than overhead expenses, disbursed by the Client Security Fund as a result of the petitioner's misconduct. The petitioner is not permitted to collaterally attack the decision of the Client Security Fund Board of Trustees regarding whether to reimburse losses occasioned by the misconduct of the petitioner. This provision shall apply to petitions for reinstatement submitted by petitioners who were disbarred after August 29, 1984;
 - (M) the petitioner has reimbursed all sums which the Disciplinary Hearing Commission found in the order of disbarment were misappropriated by the petitioner and which have not been reimbursed by the Client Security Fund;
 - (N) the petitioner paid all dues, Client Security Fund assessments, and late fees owed to the North Carolina State Bar as well as all attendee fees and late penalties due and owing to the Board of Continuing Legal Education at the time of disbarment.
 - (O) if a trustee was appointed by the court to protect the interests of the petitioner's clients, the petitioner has reimbursed the State Bar all sums expended by the State Bar to compensate the trustee and to reimburse the trustee for any expenses of the trusteeship;
 - (P) the petitioner has properly reconciled all trust or fiduciary accounts, and all entrusted funds of which the petitioner took receipt have been disbursed to the beneficial owner(s) of the funds or the petitioner has taken all necessary steps to escheat the funds.
- (4) Petitions Filed Less than Seven Years After Disbarment
- (A) Proof of Competency and Learning - If less than seven years have elapsed between the effective date of the disbarment and the filing date of the petition for reinstatement, the petitioner will also have the burden of proving by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the petitioner has the competency and learning in the law required to practice law in this state.
 - (B) Factors which may be considered in deciding the issue of competency include
 - (i) experience in the practice of law;
 - (ii) areas of expertise;
 - (iii) certification of expertise;
 - (iv) participation in continuing legal education programs in each of the three years immediately preceding the petition date;
 - (v) certification by three lawyers who are familiar with the petitioner's present knowledge of the law that the petitioner is competent to engage in the practice of law.
 - (C) The factors listed in Rule .0129(a)(4)(B) above are provided by way of example only. The petitioner's satisfaction of one or all of these factors creates no presumption that the petitioner has met the burden of proof established by this section.
 - (D) Passing Bar Exam as Conclusive Evidence - Attainment of a passing score on a regularly scheduled written Uniform Bar Examination prepared by the National Conference of Bar Examiners and successful completion of the State-Specific Component prescribed by the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners, no more than nine months before filing the petition, and taken voluntarily by the petitioner, shall be conclusive evidence on the issue of the petitioner's competence to practice law.
- (5) Bar Exam Required for Petitions Filed Seven Years or More After Disbarment - If the petition is filed seven years or more after the effective date of disbarment, reinstatement will be conditioned upon:
- (A) attainment of a passing score, within nine months following an order conditionally granting the petition, on a regularly-scheduled Uniform Bar Examination prepared by the National Conference of Bar Examiners;
 - (B) attainment of a passing score, within nine months following an order conditionally granting the petition, on a regularly-scheduled Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners; and

- (C) successful completion, within nine months following an order conditionally granting the petition, of the State-Specific Component prescribed by the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners.
- (6) Petition, Service, and Hearing - The petitioner shall file a verified petition for reinstatement with the secretary and shall contemporaneously serve a copy upon the counsel. The petition must identify each requirement for reinstatement and state how the petitioner has met each requirement. The petitioner shall attach supporting documentation establishing satisfaction of each requirement. Upon receipt of the petition, the secretary will transmit the petition to the chairperson of the commission. The chairperson will within 14 days appoint a hearing panel as provided in Rule .0108(a)(2) of this Subchapter and schedule a time and place for a hearing to take place within 60 to 90 days after the filing of the petition with the secretary. The chairperson will notify the counsel and the petitioner of the composition of the hearing panel and the time and place of the hearing, which will be conducted pursuant to the procedures set out in Rules .0114 to .0118 of this subchapter. The secretary shall transmit to the counsel and to the petitioner any notices in opposition to or concurrence with the petition filed with the secretary pursuant to .0129(a)(3)(A) or (B).
- (7) Report of Findings - As soon as possible after the conclusion of the hearing, the hearing panel will file a report containing its findings, conclusions, and recommendations with the secretary. The order may tax against the petitioner such costs and administrative fees as it deems appropriate for the necessary expenses attributable to the investigation and processing of the petition.
- (8) Review by the Council - If the hearing panel recommends that reinstatement be denied, the petitioner may file notice of appeal to the council. The notice of appeal must be filed with the secretary within 30 days after service of the panel report upon the petitioner. If no appeal is timely filed, the recommendation of the hearing panel to deny reinstatement will become a final order denying the petition. All cases in which the hearing panel recommends reinstatement of a disbarred lawyer's license shall be heard by the council and no notice of appeal need be filed by the North Carolina State Bar.
 - (A) Transcript of Hearing Panel Proceedings - Within 60 days of entry of the hearing panel's report, the petitioner shall produce a transcript of the proceedings before the hearing panel. The chairperson of the hearing panel, may, for good cause shown, extend the time to produce the transcript.
 - (B) Composition of the Record - The petitioner will provide a record of the proceedings before the hearing panel, including a legible copy of the complete transcript, all exhibits introduced into evidence, and all pleadings, motions, and orders, unless the petitioner and the counsel agree in writing to shorten the record. The petitioner will provide the proposed record to the counsel not later than 90 days after the hearing before the hearing panel, unless an extension of time is granted by the chairperson of the hearing panel for good cause shown. Any agreement regarding the record will be in writing and will be included in the record transmitted to the council.
 - (C) Settlement of the Record
 - (i) By Agreement - At any time following service of the proposed record upon the counsel, the parties may by agreement entered in the record settle the record to the council.
 - (ii) By Counsel's Failure to Object to the Proposed Record - Within 20 days after service of the proposed record, the counsel may serve a written objection or a proposed alternative record upon the petitioner. If the counsel fails to serve a notice of approval or an objection or a proposed alternative record, the petitioner's proposed record will constitute the record to the council.
 - (iii) By Judicial Settlement - If the counsel raises a timely objection to the proposed record or serves a proposed alternative record upon the petitioner, either party may request the chairperson of the hearing panel which heard the reinstatement petition to settle the record. Such request shall be filed in writing with the hearing panel chairperson no later than 15 days after the counsel files an objection or proposed alternative record. Each party shall promptly provide to the chairperson a reference copy of the proposed record, amendments and objections filed by that party in the case. The chairperson of the hearing panel shall settle the record on appeal by order not more than 20 days after service of the request for judicial settlement upon the chairperson. The chairperson may allow oral argument by the parties or may settle the record based upon written submissions by the parties.
 - (D) Filing and Service of the Settled Record - No later than 30 days before the council meeting at which the petition is to be considered, the petitioner will file the settled record with the secretary,

will make arrangements with the secretary for a copy of the settled record to be transmitted to each member of the council, and will transmit a copy of the settled record to the counsel.

- (E) Costs - The petitioner will bear the costs of transcribing, copying, and transmitting a copy of the settled record to each member of the council.
 - (F) Determination by the Council - The council will review the report of the hearing panel and the record and determine whether, and upon what conditions, the petitioner will be reinstated. The council may tax against the petitioner such costs and administrative fees as it deems appropriate for the necessary expenses attributable to the investigation and processing of the petition.
- (9) Failure to Comply with Rule .0129(a) - If the petitioner fails to comply with any provisions of this Rule .0129(a), the counsel may file a motion to dismiss the petition. The motion to dismiss shall specify the alleged deficiencies of the petition. The counsel shall serve the motion to dismiss upon the petitioner. The petitioner shall have ten days in which to file a response to the motion to dismiss.
- (10) Reapplication - No person who has been disbarred and has unsuccessfully petitioned for reinstatement may reapply until the expiration of one year from the date of the last order denying reinstatement.
- (b) After Suspension
- (1) Restoration - No lawyer who has been suspended may have his or her license restored but upon order of the commission or the secretary after the filing of a verified petition as provided herein.
 - (2) Eligibility - No lawyer who has been suspended for a period of 120 days or less is eligible for reinstatement until the expiration of the period of suspension and, in no event, until 10 days have elapsed from the date of filing the petition for reinstatement. No lawyer whose license has been suspended for a period of more than 120 days is eligible for reinstatement until the expiration of the period of suspension and, in no event, until 30 days have elapsed from the date of the filing of the petition for reinstatement.
 - (3) If the petition is filed seven years or more after the effective date of suspension, reinstatement will be conditioned upon:
 - (A) attainment of a passing score, within nine months following an order conditionally granting the petition, on a regularly-scheduled Uniform Bar Examination prepared by the National Conference of Bar Examiners;
 - (B) attainment of a passing score, within nine months following an order conditionally granting the petition, on a regularly-scheduled Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners; and
 - (C) successful completion, within nine months following an order conditionally granting the petition, of the State-Specific Component prescribed by the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners.
 - (4) Reinstatement Requirements - Any suspended lawyer seeking reinstatement must file a verified petition with the secretary, a copy of which the secretary will transmit to the counsel. The petitioner will have the burden of proving the following by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence:
 - (A) compliance with Rule .0128 of this subchapter;
 - (B) compliance with all applicable orders of the commission and the council;
 - (C) abstention from the unauthorized practice of law during the period of suspension;
 - (D) abstention from conduct during the period of suspension constituting grounds for discipline under G.S. 84-28(b);
 - (E) Reimbursement of the Client Security Fund - reimbursement of the Client Security Fund of the North Carolina State Bar for all sums, including costs other than overhead expenses, disbursed by the Client Security Fund as a result of the petitioner's misconduct. The petitioner is not permitted to collaterally attack the decision of the Client Security Fund Board of Trustees regarding whether to reimburse losses occasioned by the misconduct of the petitioner. This provision shall apply to petitions for reinstatement submitted by lawyers who were suspended after August 29, 1984;
 - (F) Reimbursement of Funds in DHC Order - reimbursement of all sums which the Disciplinary Hearing Commission found in the order of suspension were misappropriated by the petitioner and which have not been reimbursed by the Client Security Fund;
 - (G) Satisfaction of Pre-Suspension CLE Requirements - satisfaction of the minimum continuing legal education requirements, as set forth in Rule .1518 of Subchapter 1D of these rules, for the two calendar years immediately preceding the year in which the petitioner was suspended, which shall include the satisfaction of any deficit recorded in the petitioner's State Bar CLE transcript for such period; provided that the petitioner may attend CLE programs after the effective date of the

suspension to make up any unsatisfied requirement. These requirements shall be in addition to any continuing legal education requirements imposed by the Disciplinary Hearing Commission;

- (H) Satisfaction of Post-Suspension CLE Requirements - [effective for petitioners suspended on or after January 1, 1997] if two or more years have elapsed between the effective date of the suspension order and the date on which the reinstatement petition is filed with the secretary, the petitioner must, within one year prior to filing the petition, complete 15 hours of CLE approved by the Board of Continuing Legal Education pursuant to Subchapter 1D, Rule .1519 of these rules. Three hours of the 15 hours must be earned by attending courses of instruction devoted exclusively to professional responsibility and/or professionalism. These requirements shall be in addition to any continuing legal education requirements imposed by the Disciplinary Hearing Commission;
 - (I) Payment of Fees and Assessments - payment of all membership fees, Client Security Fund assessments, and late fees due and owing to the North Carolina State Bar, including any reinstatement fee due under Rule .0904 or Rule .1524 of Subchapter 1D of these rules, as well as all attendee fees and late penalties due and owing to the Board of Continuing Legal Education at the time of suspension;
 - (J) if a trustee was appointed by the court to protect the interests of the petitioner's clients, the petitioner has reimbursed the State Bar all sums expended by the State Bar to compensate the trustee and to reimburse the trustee for any expenses of the trusteeship; and
 - (K) the petitioner has properly reconciled all trust or fiduciary accounts, and all entrusted funds of which the petitioner took receipt have been disbursed to the beneficial owner(s) of the funds or the petitioner has taken all necessary steps to escheat the funds.
- (5) Investigation and Response - The counsel will conduct any necessary investigation regarding the compliance of the petitioner with the requirements set forth in Rule .0129(b)(3) above, and the counsel may file a response to the petition with the secretary prior to the date the petitioner is first eligible for reinstatement. The counsel will serve a copy of any response filed upon the petitioner.
 - (6) Failure of Counsel to File Response - If the counsel does not file a response to the petition before the date the petitioner is first eligible for reinstatement, then the secretary will issue an order of reinstatement.
 - (7) Specific Objections in Response - If the counsel files a timely response to the petition, such response must set forth specific objections supported by factual allegations sufficient to put the petitioner on notice of the events at issue.
 - (8) Reinstatement Hearing - The secretary will, upon the filing of a response to the petition, refer the matter to the chairperson of the commission. The chairperson will within 14 days appoint a hearing panel as provided in Rule .0108(a)(2) of this Subchapter, schedule a time and place for a hearing, and notify the counsel and the petitioner of the composition of the hearing panel and the time and place of the hearing. The hearing will be conducted pursuant to the procedures set out in Rules .0114 to .0118 of this subchapter.
 - (9) Reinstatement Order - The hearing panel will determine whether the petitioner's license should be reinstated and enter an appropriate order which may include additional sanctions in the event violations of the petitioner's order of suspension are found. In any event, the hearing panel must include in its order findings of fact and conclusions of law in support of its decision and may tax against the petitioner such costs and administrative fees as it deems appropriate for the necessary expenses attributable to the investigation and processing of the petition.
 - (10) Failure to Comply with Rule .0129(b) - If the petitioner fails to comply with any provision of this Rule .0129(b), the counsel may file a motion to dismiss the petition. The motion to dismiss shall specify the alleged deficiencies of the petition. The counsel shall serve the motion to dismiss upon the petitioner. The petitioner shall have ten days in which to file a response to the motion to dismiss.
- (c) After Transfer to Disability Inactive Status
- (1) Reinstatement - No member of the North Carolina State Bar transferred to disability inactive status may resume active status until reinstated by order of the commission. Any member transferred to disability inactive status will be entitled to apply to the commission for reinstatement to active status once a year or at such shorter intervals as are stated in the order transferring the member to disability inactive status or any modification thereof.
 - (2) Reinstatement Petition - Petitions for reinstatement by members transferred to disability inactive status will be filed with the secretary. Upon receipt of the petition the secretary will refer the petition to the commission chairperson. The chairperson will appoint a hearing panel as provided in Rule .0108(a)(2) of

this subchapter. A hearing will be conducted pursuant to the procedures set out in Rules .0114 to .0118 of this subchapter.

- (3) Burden of Proof - The petitioner will have the burden of proving by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that he or she is no longer disabled within the meaning of Rule .0103(19) of this subchapter and that he or she is fit to resume the practice of law.
 - (4) Medical Records - Within 10 days of filing the petition for reinstatement, the petitioner will deliver to the secretary a list of the names and addresses of every psychiatrist, psychologist, physician, hospital, and other health care provider by whom or in which the petitioner has been examined or treated or sought treatment while disabled and a written consent to release all information and records relating to the disability. The secretary will deliver to the counsel all information and records relating to the disability received from the petitioner.
 - (5) Judicial Findings - Where a member has been transferred to disability inactive status based solely upon a judicial finding of incapacity, and thereafter a court of competent jurisdiction enters an order adjudicating that the member's incapacity has ended, the chairperson of the commission will enter an order returning the member to active status upon receipt of a certified copy of the court's order. Entry of the order will not preclude the North Carolina State Bar from bringing an action pursuant to Rule .0122 of this subchapter to determine whether the member is disabled.
 - (6) Costs - The hearing panel may direct the petitioner to pay the costs of the reinstatement hearing, including the cost of any medical examination ordered by the panel.
 - (7) Failure to Comply with Rule .0129(c) - If the petitioner fails to comply with any provision of this Rule .0129(c), the counsel may file a motion to dismiss the petition. The motion to dismiss shall specify the alleged deficiencies of the petition. The counsel shall serve the motion to dismiss upon the petitioner. The petitioner shall have ten days in which to file a response to the motion to dismiss.
 - (8) Reimbursement of Trustee Fees and Expenses - If a trustee was appointed to protect the interests of the petitioner's clients, the hearing panel may require the petitioner, as a condition of reinstatement, to reimburse the State Bar sums expended by the State Bar to compensate the trustee and to reimburse the trustee for any expenses of the trusteeship.
 - (9) Entrusted Funds - The hearing panel may require the petitioner, as a condition of reinstatement, to demonstrate that the petitioner has properly reconciled all trust or fiduciary accounts and has taken all steps necessary to ensure that all entrusted funds of which the petitioner took receipt are disbursed to the beneficial owner(s) of the funds or are escheated.
- (d) Conditions of Reinstatement - The hearing panel, and the council in petitions for reinstatement from disbarment, may impose reasonable conditions on a lawyer's reinstatement from disbarment, suspension, or disability inactive status in any case in which the hearing panel concludes that such conditions are necessary for the protection of the public. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to, a requirement that the petitioner complete specified hours of continuing legal education, a requirement that the petitioner participate in medical, psychological, or substance use treatment, and a requirement that the petitioner attain a passing score on a regularly-scheduled Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners within nine months following entry of an order conditionally granting the petition.
- (e) After Entry of a Reciprocal Order of Suspension or Disbarment - No member whose license to practice law has been suspended or who has been disbarred by any state or federal court and who is the subject of a reciprocal discipline order in North Carolina may seek reinstatement of his or her North Carolina law license until the member provides to the secretary a certified copy of an order reinstating the member to the active practice of law in the state or federal court which entered the original order of discipline.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28.1; 84-29; 84-30;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 20, 1995; March 6, 1997; October 2, 1997;
December 30, 1998; July 22, 1999; August 24, 2000; March 6, 2002; February 27, 2003; October 8,
2009; March 10, 2011; September 22, 2016; December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01B .0130 ADDRESS OF RECORD

Except where otherwise specified, any provision herein for notice to a respondent, member, petitioner, or a defendant will be deemed satisfied by appropriate correspondence addressed to that attorney by mail to the last address maintained by the North Carolina State Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016.

27 NCAC 01B .0131 DISQUALIFICATION DUE TO INTEREST

No member of the council or hearing commission will participate in any disciplinary matter involving the member, any partner, or associate in the practice of law of the member, or in which the member has a personal interest.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016.

27 NCAC 01B .0132 TRUST ACCOUNTS; AUDIT

(a) Investigative Subpoena for Reasonable Cause - For reasonable cause, the chairperson of the Grievance Committee is empowered to issue an investigative subpoena to a member compelling the production of any records required to be kept relative to the handling of client funds and property by the Rules of Professional Conduct for inspection, copying, or audit by the counsel or any auditor appointed by the counsel. For the purposes of this rule, circumstances that constitute reasonable cause, include, but are not limited to:

- (1) any sworn statement of grievance received by the North Carolina State Bar alleging facts which, if true, would constitute misconduct in the handling of a client's funds or property;
- (2) any facts coming to the attention of the North Carolina State Bar, whether through random review as contemplated by Rule .0132(b) below or otherwise, which if true, would constitute a probable violation of any provision of the Rules of Professional Conduct concerning the handling of client funds or property;
- (3) two or more grievances received by the North Carolina State Bar over a 12 month period alleging facts which, if true, would indicate misconduct for neglect of a client matter or failure to communicate with a client;
- (4) any failure to respond to any notices issued by the North Carolina State Bar with regard to a grievance or a fee dispute;
- (5) any information received by the North Carolina State Bar which, if true, would constitute a failure to file any federal, state, or local tax return or pay a federal, state, or local tax obligation; or
- (6) any finding of probable cause, indictment, or conviction relative to a criminal charge involving moral turpitude. The grounds supporting the issuance of any such subpoena will be set forth upon the face of the subpoena.

(b) Random Audit Subpoenas and Investigations - The chairperson of the Grievance Committee may randomly issue investigative subpoenas to members compelling the production of any records required by the Rules of Professional Conduct to be kept relative to the handling of client funds or property for inspection by the counsel or any auditor appointed by the counsel to determine compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct. Any such subpoena will disclose upon its face its random character and contain a verification of the secretary that it was randomly issued. No member will be subject to random selection under this section more than once in three years. Any member whose random audit discloses one or more violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct may be referred by the counsel, by the director of the Trust Account Compliance Department (the department), or by the auditor to the department's Trust Account Compliance Program. Determination of a member's qualification for referral to the Trust Account Compliance Program after random audit shall be made by the counsel, by the director, or by the auditor pursuant to guidelines established by the Council. The counsel, the director, or the auditor may also report any violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct discovered during the random audit to the Grievance Committee for investigation. The director of the department and the auditor shall each have authority under the original subpoena for random audit to compel the production of any documents necessary to determine whether the attorney has corrected any violation identified during the audit.

(c) Time Limit - No subpoena issued pursuant to this rule may compel production within five days of service.

(d) Evidence - The rules of evidence applicable in the superior courts of the state will govern the use of any material subpoenaed pursuant to this rule in any hearing before the commission.

(e) Attorney-Client Privilege/Confidentiality - No assertion of attorney-client privilege or confidentiality will prevent an inspection or audit of a trust account as provided in this rule.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;

*Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: November 16, 2006; September 22, 2016;
Amended Eff. September 1, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01B .0133 CONFIDENTIALITY

(a) Allegations of Misconduct or Alleged Disability - Except as otherwise provided in this rule and G.S. 84-28(f), all information, documentation, and proceedings involving allegations of misconduct by or alleged disability of an attorney will remain confidential until:

- (1) a complaint against an attorney has been filed in the Disciplinary Hearing Commission after a finding by the Grievance Committee that there is probable cause to believe that the attorney engaged in misconduct justifying disciplinary action or is disabled;
- (2) the attorney requests that the matter be made public;
- (3) the investigation is predicated upon the attorney's conviction of a crime;
- (4) a petition or action is filed in the general courts of justice;
- (5) the attorney files an affidavit of surrender of license;
- (6) an attorney is transferred to disability inactive status pursuant to Rule .0122(a) or (b) of this Subchapter. In such an instance, the order transferring the attorney shall be public. Any other materials, including the evidence of disability supporting the order, shall be kept confidential unless and until the attorney petitions for reinstatement, unless otherwise provided in the order; or
- (7) a petition for noncompliance suspension has been filed in the Disciplinary Hearing Commission pursuant to Rule .0135 of this Subchapter.

(b) Disciplinary Complaints Filed Upon Refusal of Grievance Committee Disposition - The State Bar may disclose that it filed a complaint before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission pursuant to Rule .0113(j)(5) or .0113(l)(5) of this Subchapter upon the defendant's refusal of a disciplinary disposition offered by the Grievance Committee:

- (1) after the proceedings before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission have concluded; or
- (2) while proceedings are pending before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, to address publicity not initiated by the State Bar.

(c) Letter of Warning; Admonition - A letter of warning issued to an attorney within the preceding three years may be revealed in any subsequent disciplinary proceeding. An admonition issued to an attorney may be revealed in any subsequent disciplinary proceeding.

(d) Attorney's Response to a Grievance - This provision will not be construed to prohibit the North Carolina State Bar from providing a copy of an attorney's response to a grievance to the complaining party when the attorney has not objected thereto in writing.

(e) Law Enforcement or Regulatory Agency - This provision will not be construed to prohibit the North Carolina State Bar from providing information or evidence to any law enforcement or regulatory agency.

(f) Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism - This provision will not be construed to prohibit the North Carolina State Bar, with the approval of the chairperson of the Grievance Committee, from notifying the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism of alleged unprofessional conduct by an attorney.

(g) Lawyer Assistance Program - This provision will not be construed to prohibit the North Carolina State Bar from notifying the Lawyer Assistance Program of any circumstances that indicate an attorney may have a substance use or mental health issue.

(h) Other Jurisdictions - This provision will not be construed to prohibit the North Carolina State Bar, with the approval of the chairperson of the Grievance Committee, from providing information concerning the existence of a letter of caution, letter of warning, or admonition to any agency that regulates the legal profession in any other jurisdiction so long as the inquiring jurisdiction maintains the same level of confidentiality respecting the information as does the North Carolina State Bar.

(i) National Discipline Data Bank - The clerk of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission will transmit notice of all public discipline imposed and transfers to disability inactive status to the National Discipline Data Bank maintained by the American Bar Association.

(j) Client Security Fund Board of Trustees - The Counsel may provide information that is confidential under Paragraph (a) of this Rule to the Client Security Fund Board of Trustees to assist the Client Security Fund Board in determining losses caused by dishonest conduct of members of the North Carolina State Bar.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 20, 1996, November 7, 1996, March 2002,
October 9, 2008, September 22, 2016, March 18, 2026.*

27 NCAC 01B .0134 DISCIPLINARY AMNESTY IN ILLICIT DRUG USE CASES

(a) Information Concerning Illicit Drug Use - The North Carolina State Bar will not treat as a grievance information that a member has used or is using illicit drugs except as provided in Rules.0134(c), (d) and (e) below. The information will be provided to director of the lawyer assistance program of the North Carolina State Bar.

(b) Lawyer Assistance Program - If the director of the lawyer assistance program concludes after investigation that a member has used or is using an illicit drug and the member participates and successfully complies with any course of treatment prescribed by the lawyer assistance program, the member will not be disciplined by the North Carolina State Bar for illicit drug use occurring prior to the prescribed course of treatment.

(c) Failure to Complete Treatment - If a member under Rule .0134(b) above fails to cooperate with the Lawyer Assistance Program Board or fails to successfully complete any treatment prescribed for the member's illicit drug use, the director of the lawyer assistance program will report such failure to participate in or complete the prescribed treatment to the chairperson of the Grievance Committee. The chairperson of the Grievance Committee will then treat the information originally received as a grievance.

(d) Crime Relating to Use or Possession of Illicit Drugs - A member charged with a crime relating to the use or possession of illicit drugs will not be entitled to amnesty from discipline by the North Carolina State Bar relating to the illicit drug use or possession.

(e) Additional Misconduct - If the North Carolina State Bar receives information that a member has used or is using illicit drugs and that the member has violated some other provision of the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct, the information regarding the member's alleged illicit drug use will be referred to the director of lawyer assistance program pursuant to Rule .0134(a) above. The information regarding the member's alleged additional misconduct will be reported to the chairperson of the Grievance Committee.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;

Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016; February 3, 2000; February 20, 1995.

27 NCAC 01B .0135 NONCOMPLIANCE SUSPENSION

(a) Noncompliant and Noncompliance Defined. Failure to respond fully and timely to a letter of notice issued pursuant to N.C.A.C. 1B, .0112, failure to respond fully and timely to any request from the State Bar for additional information in any pending grievance investigation, failure to respond fully and timely to any request from the State Bar to produce documents or other tangible or electronic materials in connection with a grievance investigation, and/or failure to respond fully and timely to a subpoena issued by the chair of the Grievance Committee or issued by the secretary of the State Bar shall be referred to herein as "noncompliant" or "noncompliance."

(b) Petition for Noncompliance Suspension. If a respondent against whom a grievance file has been opened and who has been served with a letter of notice or who has been served with a subpoena issued by the chair of the Grievance Committee or issued by the secretary of the State Bar is noncompliant, the State Bar may petition the chair of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission (DHC) for an order requiring the respondent to show cause why the chair should not enter an order suspending the respondent's law license.

(c) Content of Petition

(1) The petition shall be a verified petition, or shall be supported by an affidavit, demonstrating by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the respondent is noncompliant.

(2) The petition shall set forth the efforts made by the State Bar to obtain the respondent's compliance.

(3) Service of Petition

(A) The petition shall be served upon the respondent by mailing a copy of the petition addressed to the last address the respondent provided to the Membership Department of the State Bar pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 84-34 or addressed to any more recent address that might be known to the State Bar representative who is attempting service.

(B) Service of the petition shall be complete upon mailing.

(d) Order to Show Cause

(1) Upon receiving the State Bar's filed petition, the chair of the DHC shall issue to the respondent an order to show cause.

(2) The order to show cause shall notify the respondent that the respondent's noncompliance or failure to respond to the order to show cause may result in suspension of the respondent's law license.

- (3) The order to show cause shall be served upon the respondent by mailing a copy of the order addressed to the last address the respondent provided to the Membership Department of the State Bar pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 84-34, addressed to any more recent address that might be known to the DHC, or addressed to the address where the State Bar served the petition.
 - (4) Service of the order to show cause shall be complete upon mailing.
- (e) Response to Order to Show Cause
- (1) The respondent shall respond to the order to show cause within 14 days of the date of service of the order upon the respondent.
 - (2) If the respondent responds to the order to show cause within 14 days of the date of service of the order upon the respondent, the chair of the DHC shall schedule a hearing on the order to show cause within ten days of the filing of the respondent's response and shall provide notice to the respondent and to the State Bar of such hearing.
 - (3) If the respondent does not file a response to the order to show cause within 14 days of the date of service of the order to show cause upon the respondent, the chair of the DHC may enter an order suspending the respondent's law license. Such order of suspension will remain in effect until the chair enters an order finding by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the respondent fully cured the noncompliance and reinstating the respondent's law license to active status.
- (f) Hearing on Order to Show Cause; Burden of Proof
- (1) The State Bar shall have the burden of proving the respondent's noncompliance by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence.
 - (2) If the chair of the DHC finds that the State Bar has met its burden of proof, the burden of proof shall shift to the respondent to prove one or more of the following by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence:
 - (A) That the respondent was and is fully in compliance;
 - (B) That the respondent has fully cured all noncompliance; or
 - (C) That there is good cause for the respondent's noncompliance.
- (g) Entry of Order
- If the chair finds that the State Bar has met its burden of proof; finds by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the respondent is noncompliant; finds that the respondent has not met the respondent's burden of proof; and fails to find by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence any of the circumstances listed in paragraph (f)(2) above, the chair may enter an order suspending the respondent's law license. Such order of suspension shall remain in effect until the chair enters an order finding by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the respondent fully cured the noncompliance and reinstating the respondent's law license to active status.
- (h) Wind Down
- Any attorney suspended for noncompliance shall comply with the wind-down provisions for suspended attorneys as set forth in N.C.A.C. 1B .0128.
- (i) Reinstatement from Noncompliance Suspension
- (1) Following entry of a noncompliance suspension order, the respondent may seek reinstatement by filing a verified petition with the chair of the DHC demonstrating by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the respondent has become, and is at the time of the petition, fully compliant. The respondent shall simultaneously serve a copy of the verified petition on the State Bar.
 - (2) The State Bar shall have five days from the date of receipt to file an objection to the respondent's petition. If the State Bar does not object, the chair may enter an order finding by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the respondent has become, and is at the time of the petition, fully compliant and reinstating the respondent to the active practice of law.
 - (3) If the State Bar objects to the petition, the chair shall schedule a hearing within ten days of the filing of such objection. It shall be the respondent's burden to prove by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the respondent has become, and remains at the time of the hearing, fully compliant.
 - (4) At the conclusion of the hearing, if the chair finds that the respondent has met her/his burden of proof and finds by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the respondent is fully compliant at the time of the hearing, the chair shall enter an order reinstating the respondent to the active practice of law.
- (j) Subsequent Petitions for Noncompliance Suspension The State Bar may file a petition under this rule on the first occasion when a respondent is noncompliant and may file a petition on any subsequent occasions when a respondent is noncompliant.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court: March 27, 2019.

27 NCAC 01B .0136 EXPUNGEMENT OR SEALING OF DISCIPLINE

(a) By the Chair of the Grievance Committee.

- (1) Expungement of Admonition by the Grievance Committee. A lawyer who accepted an admonition from the Grievance Committee may petition the chair of the committee to expunge the admonition as set forth herein. The petition shall be served upon the State Bar Counsel. The petitioner shall show rehabilitation by executing and attaching to the petition an affidavit certifying the following requirements for expungement of an admonition:
 - (A) The admonition (i) did not involve violation of Rules of Professional Conduct 1.19, 3.3(a), 8.4(b), or 8.4(c) or attempted violation of Rule 1.19, or (ii) did involve violation of Rule 8.4(c) but the admonition was solely related to the contents of the lawyer's advertising or marketing materials;
 - (B) Five years have elapsed since the effective date of the admonition;
 - (C) The petitioner has not been the subject of any professional discipline since the effective date of the admonition;
 - (D) The petitioner has not been convicted of violating the laws of the United States or any state or local government other than minor traffic violations since the effective date of the admonition and no criminal charges other than minor traffic violations are currently pending against the petitioner;
 - (E) There are no grievances pending against the petitioner with the North Carolina State Bar and no allegations of professional misconduct against the petitioner are currently under investigation in any other jurisdiction;
 - (F) There are no disciplinary proceedings pending against the petitioner in the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, in any court, or in any other jurisdiction; and
 - (G) The petitioner has not previously been granted expungement or sealing of a disciplinary action.
- (2) Expungement of Reprimand or Censure by the Grievance Committee. A lawyer who accepted a reprimand or a censure from the Grievance Committee may petition the chair of the committee to expunge the reprimand or the censure as set forth herein. The petition shall be served upon the State Bar Counsel. The petitioner shall show rehabilitation by executing and attaching to the petition an affidavit certifying the following requirements for expungement of a reprimand or censure:
 - (A) The reprimand or censure (i) did not involve violation of Rule of Professional Conduct 1.19, 3.3(a), 8.4(b), or 8.4(c) or attempted violation of Rule 1.19, or (ii) did involve violation of Rule 8.4(c) but the reprimand or censure was solely related to the contents of the lawyer's advertising or marketing materials;
 - (B) Ten years have elapsed since the effective date of the reprimand or censure;
 - (C) The petitioner has not been the subject of any professional discipline since the effective date of the reprimand or censure;
 - (D) The petitioner has not been convicted of violating the laws of the United States or any state or local government other than minor traffic violations since the effective date of the reprimand or censure and no criminal charges other than minor traffic violations are currently pending against the petitioner;
 - (E) There are no grievances pending against the petitioner with the North Carolina State Bar and no allegations of professional misconduct against the petitioner are currently under investigation in any other jurisdiction; and
 - (F) There are no disciplinary proceedings pending against the petitioner in the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, in any court, or in any other jurisdiction; and
 - (G) The petitioner has not previously been granted expungement or sealing of a disciplinary action.
- (3) Determination by the Chair of the Grievance Committee.
 - (A) The Office of Counsel shall have 30 days from the date of service of the petition to produce any information or documentation concerning whether the requirements for expungement are satisfied. Such information shall be transmitted to the petitioner and the chair of the Committee.
 - (B) If the chair of the Grievance Committee concludes that the requirements in Rule .0136(a)(1) have been satisfied, the chair shall enter an order expunging the admonition. If the chair of the Grievance Committee concludes that the requirements in Rule .0136(a)(2) have been satisfied, the chair shall enter an order expunging the reprimand or censure.

(b) By the Chair of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission.

- (1) Expungement of Admonition Entered by the Disciplinary Hearing Commission. A lawyer in whose case the Disciplinary Hearing Commission entered an order of discipline imposing an admonition may petition the chair of the commission to expunge the admonition as set forth herein. The petition shall be filed with the commission and served upon the State Bar Counsel. The petitioner shall show rehabilitation by executing and attaching to the petition an affidavit certifying the following requirements for expungement of an admonition:
 - (A) The admonition (i) did not involve violation of Rule of Professional Conduct 1.19, 3.3(a), 8.4(b), or 8.4(c) or attempted violation of Rule 1.19, or (ii) did involve violation of Rule 8.4(c) but the admonition was solely related to the contents of the lawyer's advertising or marketing materials;
 - (B) Five years have elapsed since the effective date of the admonition;
 - (C) The petitioner has not been the subject of any professional discipline since the effective date of the admonition;
 - (D) The petitioner has not been convicted of violating the laws of the United States or any state or local government other than minor traffic violations since the effective date of the admonition and no criminal charges other than minor traffic violations are currently pending against the petitioner;
 - (E) There are no grievances pending against the petitioner with the North Carolina State Bar and no allegations of professional misconduct against the petitioner are currently under investigation in any other jurisdiction;
 - (F) There are no disciplinary proceedings pending against the petitioner in the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, in any court, or in any other jurisdiction; and
 - (G) The petitioner has not previously been granted expungement or sealing of a disciplinary action.
 - (2) Expungement of Reprimand or Censure Entered by the Disciplinary Hearing Commission. A lawyer in whose case the Disciplinary Hearing Commission entered an order of discipline imposing a reprimand or a censure may petition the chair of the commission to expunge the reprimand or censure as set forth herein. The petition shall be filed with the commission and served upon the State Bar Counsel. The petitioner shall show rehabilitation by executing and attaching to the petition an affidavit certifying the following requirements for expungement of a reprimand or censure:
 - (A) The reprimand or censure (i) did not involve violation of Rule of Professional Conduct 1.19, 3.3(a), 8.4(b), or 8.4(c) or attempted violation of Rule 1.19 or (ii) did involve violation of Rule 8.4(c) but the reprimand or censure was solely related to the contents of the lawyer's advertising or marketing materials;
 - (B) Ten years have elapsed since the effective date of the reprimand or censure;
 - (C) The petitioner has not been the subject of any professional discipline since the effective date of the reprimand or censure;
 - (D) The petitioner has not been convicted of violating the laws of the United States or any state or local government other than minor traffic violations since the effective date of the reprimand or censure and no criminal charges other than minor traffic violations are currently pending against the petitioner;
 - (E) There are no grievances pending against the petitioner with the North Carolina State Bar and no allegations of professional misconduct against the petitioner are currently under investigation in any other jurisdiction;
 - (F) There are no disciplinary proceedings pending against the petitioner in the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, in any court, or in any other jurisdiction; and
 - (G) The petitioner has not previously been granted expungement or sealing of a disciplinary action.
 - (3) Determination by the Chair of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission.
 - (A) The Office of Counsel shall have 30 days from the date of service of the petition to file a response with information or documentation concerning whether the requirements for expungement are satisfied. The response shall be transmitted to the petitioner.
 - (B) If the chair of the commission concludes that the requirements in Rule .0136(b)(1) have been satisfied, the chair shall enter an order expunging the admonition. If the chair of the commission concludes that the requirements in Rule .0136(b)(2) have been satisfied, the chair shall enter an order expunging the reprimand or censure.
- (c) Effect of Expungement of Admonition, Reprimand, or Censure.
- (1) An admonition, reprimand, or censure that is expunged by the chair of the Grievance Committee or by the chair of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission shall be removed from the petitioner's disciplinary record

and from the State Bar website. For disciplinary actions expunged by the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, all filings in the case shall be removed from the publicly accessible records of the commission.

- (2) In determining the disposition of any future grievances against the petitioner, the State Bar's Grievance Committee will not consider expunged discipline.
- (3) The State Bar shall maintain a confidential record of expunged discipline, including all filings in the Disciplinary Hearing Commission case that resulted in the discipline, which will not be available for public inspection and will not be disclosed except as provided in subsection (h) of this rule.
- (4) The petitioner will not be held thereafter to have made a false statement by reason of failing to recite or acknowledge the expunged discipline. This subsection shall not apply in a DHC or judicial disciplinary proceeding in which the petitioner has been found to have engaged in misconduct and the tribunal is determining what discipline should be imposed.

(d) Sealing Order of Stayed Suspension Entered by the Disciplinary Hearing Commission.

- (1) A lawyer in whose case the Disciplinary Hearing Commission entered an order imposing a stayed suspension of the lawyer's law license may petition the chair of the commission to seal the order of discipline as set forth herein. The petition shall be filed with the commission and served upon the State Bar Counsel. The petitioner shall show rehabilitation by executing and attaching to the petition an affidavit certifying the following requirements for sealing an order of discipline:
 - (A) The order of discipline imposing the stayed suspension (i) did not involve violation of Rule of Professional Conduct 1.19, 3.3(a), 8.4(b), or 8.4(c) or attempted violation of Rule 1.19, or (ii) the stayed suspension did involve violation of Rule 8.4(b) and/or Rule 8.4(c) but the order of discipline was related solely to the lawyer's failure to file and/or pay personal income taxes;
 - (B) Ten years have elapsed since the effective date of the stayed suspension;
 - (C) The petitioner has not been the subject of any professional discipline since the effective date of the stayed suspension;
 - (D) The petitioner has not been convicted of violating the laws of the United States or any state or local government other than minor traffic violations since the effective date of the order of discipline and no criminal charges other than minor traffic violations are currently pending against the petitioner;
 - (E) There are no grievances pending against the petitioner with the North Carolina State Bar and no allegations of professional misconduct against the petitioner are currently under investigation in any other jurisdiction;
 - (F) There are no disciplinary proceedings pending against the petitioner in the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, in any court, or in any other jurisdiction;
 - (G) The suspension imposed in the order of discipline was entirely stayed, no portion of the suspension was activated by the commission, and the period of the stay was not extended by the commission due to noncompliance with conditions; and
 - (H) The petitioner has not previously been granted expungement or sealing of a disciplinary action.
- (2) Determination by Chair of the Commission.
 - (A) The Office of Counsel shall have 30 days from the date of service of the petition to file a response with information or documentation concerning whether the requirements for sealing a disciplinary order are satisfied. The response shall be transmitted to the petitioner.
 - (B) If the chair of the commission concludes that the requirements of Rule .0136(d)(1) have been satisfied by the petitioner, the chair shall enter an order sealing the order of stayed suspension and all other filings in the case, including the filings related to the petition to seal the disciplinary order.
- (3) Effect of Sealing an Order of Stayed Suspension.
 - (A) An order of stayed suspension that has been sealed by the chair of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission shall be removed from the State Bar website and all filings in the case shall be removed from the publicly accessible records of the commission.
 - (B) The State Bar will maintain a confidential record of the sealed order of stayed suspension and other filings in the case, which shall not be available for public inspection. The sealed order of stayed suspension may be introduced into evidence and considered in any future disciplinary action against the petitioner. Otherwise, the sealed order of stayed suspension shall not be disclosed except as provided in subsection (h) of this rule.

(e) Orders of Active Suspension, Activated or Extended Orders of Stayed Suspension, and Orders of Disbarment Shall Not Be Expunged or Sealed. An order of discipline imposing an active suspension, imposing a stayed suspension that was activated or extended due to noncompliance, or imposing disbarment shall not be expunged or sealed.

(f) Eligibility Limited to Single Disciplinary Action. A lawyer who is granted expungement or sealing of professional discipline pursuant to this rule is not eligible for expungement or sealing of additional professional discipline.

(g) Rescission of Expungement or Sealing of Discipline. Upon receipt of information indicating that a certification in the affidavit supporting a petition to expunge or seal a disciplinary action was false, the Office of Counsel may submit a written request to the chair of the Grievance Committee or file a motion in the Disciplinary Hearing Commission requesting that the expungement or sealing of the disciplinary action be rescinded. The request or motion shall be served upon the lawyer who made the certification and the lawyer shall have 30 days from the date of service to submit a written response. If the chair of the Grievance Committee or the Disciplinary Hearing Commission concludes that the expungement or sealing of the disciplinary action was based upon a false certification by the petitioner, the order of expungement or order sealing the disciplinary order shall be rescinded.

(h) Confidential State Bar Records. The State Bar shall maintain confidential records of expunged discipline, sealed disciplinary orders, petitions to expunge or seal, and orders granting expungement or sealing pursuant to this rule. These confidential records may be disclosed only as follows:

- (1) Upon request of a judge of the North Carolina General Court of Justice for the purpose of ascertaining whether a lawyer has previously been granted an expungement or sealing of professional discipline.
- (2) Upon request of a lawyer seeking confirmation that disciplinary action against the requesting lawyer has been expunged or sealed.
- (3) Pursuant to a search warrant, grand jury subpoena, or court order directing or authorizing the State Bar to provide records to any law enforcement or national security agency.
- (4) In response to a petition for expungement by a lawyer to whom expungement or sealing was previously granted and who is therefore ineligible for expungement or sealing of additional disciplinary actions pursuant to section (f) of this rule.
- (5) In a request to rescind the order of expungement pursuant to section (g) of this rule.
- (6) In a DHC or judicial disciplinary proceeding in which the petitioner has been found to have engaged in misconduct and the tribunal is determining what discipline should be imposed.

(i) Removal of Disciplinary Record of Deceased Lawyer from State Bar Website. One year after the State Bar is notified of a lawyer's death, the State Bar shall remove from the State Bar website any orders of discipline entered against the lawyer.

(j) Removal of Orders of Dismissal from State Bar Website. Three years after the entry of an order by the Disciplinary Hearing Commission dismissing all charges of misconduct against a lawyer, the lawyer against whom the dismissed charges were filed may request that the order of dismissal be removed from the State Bar website. Requests for removal under this section shall be directed to the State Bar Counsel, who shall direct that the order be removed from the website if the order dismissed all charges of misconduct against the lawyer and three years have elapsed since entry of the order.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28;
Approved by the Supreme Court: March 19, 2025.*

27 NCAC 01B .0137 VEXATIOUS COMPLAINANTS

(a) Designation as a Vexatious Complainant.

- (1) A person who submits to the State Bar grievances asserting allegations that, even if proven, would not constitute violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct or asserting allegations that are conclusively disproven by available evidence, and does so in a manner or in a volume amounting to abuse of the State Bar disciplinary process, may be designated by the chair of the Grievance Committee to be a vexatious complainant. Abuse of the State Bar disciplinary process includes repetitive, abusive, or frivolous allegations or communications by the complainant. Allegations that are contentious or are found to be without merit are not, standing alone, an abuse of the State Bar disciplinary process.
- (2) The Office of Counsel shall mail a notice of the designation to the complainant at the complainant's last known address. The notice shall contain a statement describing the factual basis for the designation. If the complainant does not request review of the designation pursuant to Paragraph (a)(3) of this Rule, the designation by the chair of the Grievance Committee shall be final and not subject to further review or reversal.
- (3) A complainant designated as vexatious may seek review of the designation by filing a request for review with the clerk of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission and addressed to the chair of the commission. The

complainant shall serve a copy of the request upon the State Bar Counsel. The request for review must be filed within 30 days after the Office of Counsel mailed the notice issued under Paragraph (a)(2) of this Rule.

- (4) The Office of Counsel may file a response to the request for review within 15 days of the State Bar's receipt of the request for review.
- (5) Based upon the written submissions by the complainant and the Office of Counsel, the chair of the commission may either uphold or vacate the designation.
- (6) Pursuant to G.S. 84-28.3(b), designation of a complainant as vexatious under this rule shall be final and conclusive and not subject to further review.

(b) Consequences of Designation as Vexatious Complainant. The State Bar may decline to review and process any grievance initiated by a person who has been designated a vexatious complainant, unless

- (1) the grievance is submitted with a verification signed by the complainant under penalty of perjury that the allegations are true; and
- (2) the grievance is submitted on the complainant's behalf by a member of the North Carolina State Bar who
 - (A) has an active North Carolina law license;
 - (B) is not currently designated as a vexatious complainant; and
 - (C) is not currently the respondent in a pending grievance investigation or the defendant in a pending attorney disciplinary proceeding.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28;
Approved by the Supreme Court: March 19, 2025.*

SECTION .0200 - RULES GOVERNING JUDICIAL DISTRICT GRIEVANCE COMMITTEES

27 NCAC 01B .0201 ORGANIZATION OF JUDICIAL DISTRICT GRIEVANCE COMMITTEES

(a) Judicial Districts Eligible to Form District Grievance Committees

- (1) Membership Requirements for Establishing a District Grievance Committee - Any judicial district which has more than 100 licensed attorneys as determined by the North Carolina State Bar's records may establish a judicial district grievance committee (hereafter, "district grievance committee") pursuant to the rules and regulations set out herein. A judicial district with fewer than 100 licensed attorneys may establish a district grievance committee with consent of the Council of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (2) Multi-District Grievance Committees - One or more judicial districts, including those with fewer than 100 licensed attorneys, may also establish a multi-district grievance committee, as set out in Rule .0201(b)(2) below. Such multi-district grievance committees shall be subject to all of the rules and regulations set out herein and all references to district grievance committees in these rules shall also apply to multi-district grievance committees.

(b) Creation of District Grievance Committees

- (1) Meeting Establishing a District Grievance Committee and Certification - A judicial district may establish a district grievance committee at a duly called meeting of the judicial district bar, at which a quorum is present, upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the active members present. Within 30 days of the election, the president of the judicial district bar shall certify in writing the establishment of the district grievance committee to the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (2) Meeting Establishing a Multi-District Grievance Committee and Certification - A multi-district grievance committee may be established by affirmative vote of a majority of the active members of each participating judicial district present at a duly called meeting of each participating judicial district bar, at which a quorum is present. Within 30 days of the election, the chairperson of the multi-district grievance committee shall certify in writing the establishment of the district grievance committee to the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar. The active members of each participating judicial district may adopt a set of bylaws not inconsistent with these rules by majority vote of the active members of each participating judicial district present at a duly called meeting of each participating judicial district bar, at which a quorum is present. The chairperson of the multi-district grievance committee shall promptly provide a copy of any such bylaws to the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar.

(c) Appointment of District Grievance Committee Members

- (1) Members of District Committees - Each district grievance committee shall be composed of not fewer than five nor more than 21 members, all of whom shall be active members in good standing both of the judicial

district bar to which they belong and of the North Carolina State Bar. In addition to the attorney members, each district grievance committee may also include one to five public members who have never been licensed to practice law in any jurisdiction. Public members shall not perform investigative functions regarding grievances but in all other respects shall have the same authority as the attorney members of the district grievance committee.

- (2) Chairperson - The chairperson of the district grievance committee shall be selected by the president of the judicial district and shall serve at his or her pleasure. Alternatively, the chairperson may be selected and removed as provided in the district bar bylaws.
- (3) Selection of Attorney and Public Members - The attorney and public members of the district grievance committee shall be selected by and serve at the pleasure of the president of the judicial district bar and the chairperson of the district grievance committee. Alternatively, the district grievance committee members may be selected and removed as provided in the district bar bylaws.
- (4) Term and Replacement of Members - The members of the district grievance committee, including the chairperson, shall be appointed for staggered three-year terms, except that the president and chairperson shall appoint some of the initial committee members to terms of less than three years, to effectuate the staggered terms. No member shall serve more than one term, without first having rotated off the committee for a period of at least one year between three-year terms. Any member who resigns or otherwise becomes ineligible to continue serving as a member shall be replaced by appointment by the president of the judicial district bar and the chairperson of the committee or as provided in the district bar bylaws as soon as practicable.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. October 7, 2010.*

27 NCAC 01B .0202 JURISDICTION & AUTHORITY OF DISTRICT GRIEVANCE COMMITTEES

- (a) District Grievance Committees are Subject to the Rules of the North Carolina State Bar - The district grievance committee shall be subject to the rules and regulations adopted by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (b) Grievances Filed With District Grievance Committee - A district grievance committee may investigate and consider grievances filed against attorneys who live or maintain offices within the judicial district and which are filed in the first instance with the chairperson of the district grievance committee. The chairperson of the district grievance committee will immediately refer to the State Bar any grievance filed locally in the first instance which
 - (1) alleges misconduct against a member of the district grievance committee;
 - (2) alleges that any attorney has embezzled or misapplied client funds; or
 - (3) alleges any other serious violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct which may be beyond the capacity of the district grievance committee to investigate.
- (c) Grievances Referred to District Grievance Committee - The district grievance committee shall also investigate and consider such grievances as are referred to it for investigation by the counsel of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (d) Grievances Involving Fee Disputes
 - (1) Notice to Complainant of Fee Dispute Resolution Program - If a grievance filed initially with the district bar consists solely or in part of a fee dispute, the chairperson of the district grievance committee shall notify the complainant in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the grievance that the complainant may elect to participate in the North Carolina State Bar Fee Dispute Resolution Program. If the grievance consists solely of a fee dispute, the letter to the complainant shall follow the format set out in Rule .0208 of this subchapter. If the grievance consists in part of matters other than a fee dispute, the letter to the complainant shall follow the format set out in Rule .0209 of this subchapter. A respondent attorney shall not have the right to elect to participate in fee arbitration.
 - (2) Handling Claims Not Involving Fee Dispute - Where a grievance alleges multiple claims, the allegations not involving a fee dispute will be handled in the same manner as any other grievance filed with the district grievance committee.
 - (3) Handling Claims Not Submitted to Fee Dispute Resolution by Complainant - If the complainant elects not to participate in the State Bar's Fee Dispute Resolution Program, or fails to notify the chairperson that he or she elects to participate within 20 days following mailing of the notice referred to in Rule .0202(d)(1) above, the grievance will be handled in the same manner as any other grievance filed with the district grievance committee.

- (4) Referral to Fee Dispute Resolution Program - Where a complainant timely elects to participate in fee dispute resolution, the chairperson of the district grievance committee shall refer the portion of the grievance involving a fee dispute to the State Bar Fee Dispute Resolution Program for resolution. If the grievance consists entirely of a fee dispute, and the complainant timely elects to participate in fee dispute resolution, no grievance file will be established.
- (e) Authority of District Grievance Committees - The district grievance committee shall have authority to
 - (1) assist a complainant who requests assistance to reduce a grievance to writing;
 - (2) investigate complaints described in Rule .0202(b) and(c) above by interviewing the complainant, the attorney against whom the grievance was filed and any other persons who may have relevant information regarding the grievance and by requesting written materials from the complainant, respondent attorney, and other individuals;
 - (3) explain the procedures of the district grievance committee to complainants and respondent attorneys;
 - (4) find facts and recommend whether or not the State Bar's Grievance Committee should find that there is probable cause to believe that the respondent has violated one or more provisions of the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct. The district grievance committee may also make a recommendation to the State Bar regarding the appropriate disposition of the case, including referral to the Lawyer Assistance Program pursuant to Rule .0112(j) or to a program of law office management training approved by the State Bar;
 - (5) draft a written report stating the grounds for the recommended disposition of a grievance assigned to the district grievance committee;
 - (6) notify the complainant and the respondent attorney where the district grievance committee recommends that the State Bar find that there is no probable cause to believe that the respondent has violated the Rules of Professional Conduct. Where the district grievance committee recommends that the State Bar find that there is probable cause to believe that the respondent has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct, the committee shall notify the respondent attorney of its recommendation and shall notify the complainant that the district grievance committee has concluded its investigation and has referred the matter to the State Bar for final resolution. Where the district grievance committee recommends a finding of no probable cause, the letter of notification to the respondent attorney and to the complainant shall follow the format set out in Rule .0210 of this subchapter. Where the district grievance committee recommends a finding of probable cause, the letter of notification to the respondent attorney shall follow the format set out in Rule .0211 of this subchapter. The letter of notification to the complainant shall follow the format set out in Rule .0212 of this subchapter;
 - (7) maintain records of grievances investigated by the district grievance committee for at least one year from the date on which the district grievance committee makes its final recommendation regarding a grievance to the State Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 3, 1999; December 20, 2000; August 23, 2007;
September 25, 2019.

27 NCAC 01B .0203 MEETINGS OF THE DISTRICT GRIEVANCE COMMITTEES

- (a) Notice of Meeting - The district grievance committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson upon reasonable notice, as often as is necessary to dispatch its business and not less than once every 60 days, provided the committee has grievances pending.
- (b) Confidentiality - The district grievance committee shall meet in private. Discussions of the committee, its records and its actions shall be confidential. The names of the members of the committee shall not be confidential.
- (c) Quorum - A simple majority of the district grievance committee must be present at any meeting in order to constitute a quorum. The committee may take no action unless a quorum is present. A majority vote in favor of a motion or any proposed action shall be required for the motion to pass or the action to be taken.
- (d) Appearances by Complainants and Respondents - No complainant nor any attorney against whom a grievance has been filed may appear before the district grievance committee, present argument to or be present at the committee's deliberations.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01B .0204 PROCEDURE UPON INSTITUTION OF A GRIEVANCE

(a) Receipt of Grievance - A grievance may be filed by any person against a member of the North Carolina State Bar. Such grievance must be in writing and signed by the complaining person. A district grievance committee may, however, investigate matters which come to its attention during the investigation of a grievance, whether or not such matters are included in the original written grievance.

(b) Acknowledgment of Receipt of Grievance from State Bar - The chairperson of the district grievance committee shall send a letter to the complainant within 10 working days of receipt of the grievance from the State Bar, acknowledging that a grievance file has been set up. The acknowledgment letter shall include the name of the district grievance committee member assigned to investigate the matter and shall follow the format set out in Rule .0213 of this subchapter. A copy of the letter shall be sent contemporaneously to the office of counsel of the State Bar.

(c) Notice to State Bar of Locally Filed Grievances

- (1) Where a grievance is filed in the first instance with the district grievance committee, the chairperson of the district grievance committee shall notify the office of counsel of the State Bar of the name of the complainant, respondent attorney, file number and nature of the grievance within 10 working days of receipt of the grievance.
- (2) The chairperson of the district grievance committee shall send a letter to the complainant within 10 working days of receipt of the grievance, acknowledging that a grievance file has been set up. The acknowledgment letter shall include the name of the district grievance committee member assigned to investigate the matter and shall follow the format set out in Rule .0213 of this subchapter.
- (3) Grievances filed initially with the district grievance committee shall be assigned a local file number which shall be used to refer to the grievance. The first two digits of the file number shall indicate the year in which the grievance was filed, followed by the number of the judicial district, the letters GR, and ending with the number of the file. File numbers shall be assigned sequentially during the calendar year, beginning with the number 1. For example, the first locally filed grievance set up in the 10th judicial district in 1994 would bear the following number: 9410GR001.

(d) Assignment to Investigating Member - Within 10 working days after receipt of a grievance, the chairperson shall appoint a member of the district grievance committee to investigate the grievance and shall forward the relevant materials to the investigating member. The letter to the investigating member shall follow the format set out in Rule .0214 of this subchapter.

(e) Investigation of the Grievance

- (1) The investigating member shall attempt to contact the complainant as soon as possible but no later than 15 working days after receiving notice of the assignment. If the initial contact with the complainant is made in writing, the letter shall follow the format set out in Rule .0215 of this subchapter.
- (2) The investigating member shall have the authority to contact other witnesses or individuals who may have information about the subject of the grievance, including the respondent.
- (3) The failure of the complainant to cooperate shall not cause a grievance to be dismissed or abated. Once filed, grievances shall not be dismissed or abated upon the request of the complainant.

(f) Letter of Notice to Respondent Attorney and Responses

- (1) Within 10 working days after receipt of a grievance, the chairperson of the district grievance committee shall send a copy of the grievance and a letter of notice to the respondent attorney. The letter to the respondent attorney shall follow the form set out in Rule .0216 of this subchapter and shall be sent by U.S. Mail to the attorney's last known address on file with the State Bar. The letter of notice shall request the respondent to reply to the investigating attorney in writing within 15 days after receipt of the letter of notice.
- (2) A substance of grievance will be provided to the district grievance committee by the State Bar at the time the file is assigned to the committee. The substance of grievance will summarize the nature of the complaint against the respondent attorney and cite the applicable provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct, if any.
- (3) The respondent attorney shall respond in writing to the letter of notice from the district grievance committee within 15 days of receipt of the letter. The chairperson of the district grievance committee may allow a longer period for response, for good cause shown.
- (4) If the respondent attorney fails to respond in a timely manner to the letter of notice, the chairperson of the district grievance committee may seek the assistance of the State Bar to issue a subpoena or take other appropriate steps to ensure a proper and complete investigation of the grievance. District grievance committees do not have authority to issue a subpoena to a witness or respondent attorney.

- (5) Unless necessary to complete its investigation, the district grievance committee should not release copies of the respondent attorney's response to the grievance to the complainant. The investigating attorney may summarize the response for the complainant orally or in writing.
- (g) District Grievance Committee Deliberations
- (1) Upon completion of the investigation, the investigating member shall promptly report his or her findings and recommendations to the district grievance committee in writing.
 - (2) The district grievance committee shall consider the submissions of the parties, the information gathered by the investigating attorney and such other material as it deems relevant in reaching a recommendation. The district grievance committee may also make further inquiry as it deems appropriate, including investigating other facts and possible violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct discovered during its investigation.
 - (3) The district grievance committee shall make a determination as to whether or not it finds that there is probable cause to believe that the respondent violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (h) Report of Committee's Decision
- (1) Upon making a decision in a case, the district grievance committee shall submit a written report to the office of counsel, including its recommendation and the basis for its decision. The original file and grievance materials of the investigating attorney shall be sent to the State Bar along with the report. The letter from the district bar grievance committee enclosing the report shall follow the format set out in Rule .0217 of this subchapter.
 - (2) The district grievance committee shall submit its written report to the office of counsel no later than 180 days after the grievance is initiated or received by the district committee. The State Bar may recall any grievance file which has not been investigated and considered by a district grievance committee within 180 days after the matter is assigned to the committee. The State Bar may also recall any grievance file for any reason.
 - (3) Within 10 working days of submitting the written report and returning the file to the office of counsel, the chairperson of the district grievance committee shall notify the respondent attorney and the complainant in writing of the district grievance committee's recommendation, as provided in Rule .0202(d)(6) of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01B .0205 RECORD KEEPING

The district grievance committee shall maintain records of all grievances referred to it by the State Bar and all grievances initially filed with the district grievance committee for at least one year. The district grievance committee shall provide such reports and information as are requested of it from time to time by the State Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01B .0206 MISCELLANEOUS

- (a) Assistance and Questions - The office of counsel, including the staff attorneys and the grievance coordinator, are available to answer questions and provide assistance regarding any matters before the district grievance committee.
- (b) Missing Attorneys - Where a respondent attorney is missing or cannot be located, the district grievance committee shall promptly return the grievance file to the office of counsel for appropriate action.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01B .0207 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- (a) No district grievance committee shall investigate or consider a grievance which alleges misconduct by any current member of the committee. If a file is referred to the committee by the State Bar or is initiated locally which alleges misconduct by a member of the district grievance committee, the file will be sent to the State Bar for investigation and handling within 10 working days after receipt of the grievance.

(b) A member of a district grievance committee shall not investigate or participate in deliberations concerning any of the following matters:

- (1) alleged misconduct of an attorney who works in the same law firm or office with the committee member;
- (2) alleged misconduct of a relative of the committee member;
- (3) a grievance involving facts concerning which the committee member or a partner or associate in the committee member's law firm acted as an attorney.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01B .0208 LETTER TO COMPLAINANT WHERE LOCAL GRIEVANCE ALLEGES FEE DISPUTE ONLY

John Smith
Anywhere, N.C.

Re: Your complaint against Jane Doe

Dear Mr. Smith:

The district grievance committee has received your complaint against the above-listed attorney. Based upon our initial review of the materials which you submitted, it appears that your complaint involves a fee dispute. Accordingly, I would like to take this opportunity to notify you of the North Carolina State Bar Fee Dispute Resolution Program. The program is designed to provide citizens with a means of resolving disputes over attorney fees at no cost to them and without going to court. A pamphlet which describes the program in greater detail is enclosed, along with an application form.

If you would like to participate in the fee dispute resolution program, please complete and return the form to me within 20 days of the date of this letter. If you decide to participate, no grievance file will be opened and the district bar grievance committee will take no other action against the attorney.

If you do not wish to participate in the fee dispute resolution program, you may elect to have your complaint investigated by the district grievance committee. If we do not hear from you within 20 days of the date of this letter, we will assume that you do not wish to participate in fee dispute resolution, and we will handle your complaint like any other grievance. However, the district grievance committee has no authority to attempt to resolve a fee dispute between an attorney and his or her client. Its sole function is to investigate your complaint and make a recommendation to the North Carolina State Bar regarding whether there is probable cause to believe that the attorney has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct which govern attorneys in this state.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Chairperson
District Bar Grievance Committee

cc: PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL
Director of Investigations,
The N.C. State Bar

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. August 23, 2007.*

27 NCAC 01B .0209 LETTER TO COMPLAINANT WHERE LOCAL GRIEVANCE ALLEGES FEE DISPUTE AND OTHER VIOLATIONS

John Smith
Anywhere, N.C.

Re: Your complaint against Jane Doe

Dear Mr. Smith:

The district grievance committee has received your complaint against the above-listed attorney. Based upon our initial review of the materials which you submitted, it appears that your complaint involves a fee dispute as well as other possible violations of the rules of ethics. Accordingly, I would like to take this opportunity to notify you of the North Carolina State Bar Fee Dispute Resolution Program. The program is designed to provide citizens with a means of resolving disputes over attorney fees at no cost to them and without going to court. A pamphlet which describes the program in greater detail is enclosed, along with an application form.

If you would like to participate in the fee dispute resolution program, please complete and return the form to me within 20 days of the date of this letter. If you decide to participate, the fee dispute resolution committee will handle those portions of your complaint which involve an apparent fee dispute.

If you do not wish to participate in the fee dispute resolution program, you may elect to have your entire complaint investigated by the district grievance committee. If we do not hear from you within 20 days of the date of this letter, we will assume that you do not wish to participate in fee dispute resolution, and we will handle your entire complaint like any other grievance. However, the district grievance committee has no authority to attempt to resolve a fee dispute between an attorney and his or her client. Its sole function is to investigate your complaint and make a recommendation to the North Carolina State Bar regarding whether there is probable cause to believe that the attorney has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct which govern attorneys in this state.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Chairperson
District Bar Grievance Committee

cc: PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL
Director of Investigations
The N.C. State Bar

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. August 23, 2007.*

27 NCAC 01B .0210 LETTER TO COMPLAINANT/RESPONDENT WHERE DISTRICT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS FINDING OF NO PROBABLE CAUSE

John Smith
Anywhere, N.C.

Re: Your complaint against Jane Doe
Our File No.

Dear Mr. Smith:

The district grievance committee has completed its investigation of your grievance. Based upon its investigation, the committee does not believe that there is probable cause to find that the attorney has violated any provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct. The committee will forward a report with its recommendation to the North Carolina State Bar Grievance Committee. The final decision regarding your grievance will be made by the North Carolina State Bar Grievance Committee. You will be notified in writing of the State Bar's decision.

If you have any questions or wish to communicate further regarding your grievance, you may contact the North Carolina State Bar at the following address:

The North Carolina State Bar
Grievance Committee
P.O. Box 25908
Raleigh, N.C. 27611

Neither I nor any member of the district grievance committee can give you any advice regarding any legal rights you may have regarding the matters set out in your grievance. You may pursue any questions you have regarding your legal rights with an attorney of your choice.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Chairperson
District Grievance Committee

cc: PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
Respondent Attorney

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
Director of Investigations
The N.C. State Bar

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

**27 NCAC 01B .0211 LETTER TO RESPONDENT WHERE DISTRICT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS
FINDING OF PROBABLE CAUSE**

Ms. Jane Doe
Anywhere, N.C.

Re: Grievance of John Smith
Our File No.

Dear Ms. Doe:

The district grievance committee has completed its investigation of Mr. Smith's grievance and has voted to recommend that the North Carolina State Bar Grievance Committee find probable cause to believe that you violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct. Specifically, the [] district grievance committee found that there is probable cause to believe that you may have violated [set out brief description of rule allegedly violated and pertinent facts].

The final decision in this matter will be made by the North Carolina State Bar Grievance Committee and you will be notified in writing of the State Bar's decision. The complainant has been notified that the district grievance committee has concluded its investigation and that the grievance has been sent to the North Carolina State Bar for final resolution, but has not been informed of the district committee's specific recommendation.

If you have any questions or wish to communicate further regarding this grievance, you may contact the North Carolina State Bar at the following address:

The North Carolina State Bar
Grievance Committee
P.O. Box 25908
Raleigh, N.C. 27611
Tel. 919-828-4620

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Chairperson
District Grievance Committee

cc: PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
Director of Investigations
The N.C. State Bar

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

**27 NCAC 01B .0212 LETTER TO COMPLAINANT WHERE DISTRICT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS
FINDING OF PROBABLE CAUSE**

John Smith
Anywhere, N.C.

Re: Your complaint against Jane Doe
Our File No.

Dear Mr. Smith:

The district grievance committee has completed its investigation of your grievance and has forwarded its file to the North Carolina State Bar Grievance Committee in Raleigh for final resolution. The final decision in this matter will be made by the North Carolina State Bar Grievance Committee and you will be notified in writing of the State Bar's decision.

If you have any questions or wish to communicate further regarding your grievance, you may contact the North Carolina State Bar at the following address:

The North Carolina State Bar
Grievance Committee
P.O. Box 25908
Raleigh, N.C. 27611

Neither I nor any member of the district grievance committee can give you any advice regarding any legal rights you may have regarding the matters set out in your grievance. You may pursue any questions you have regarding your legal rights with an attorney of your choice.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Chairperson
District Grievance Committee

cc: PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
Respondent Attorney

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
Director of Investigations
The N.C. State Bar

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01B .0213 LETTER TO COMPLAINANT ACKNOWLEDGING GRIEVANCE

John Smith
Anywhere, N.C.

Re: Your complaint against Jane Doe
Our File No. []

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am the chairperson of the [] district grievance committee. Your grievance against [respondent attorney] [was received in my office]\[has been forwarded to my office by the North Carolina State Bar] on [date]. I have assigned [investigator's name], a member of the [] district grievance committee, to investigate your grievance. []'s name, address and telephone number are as follows: [].

Please be sure that you have provided all information and materials which relate to or support your complaint to the [] district grievance committee. If you have other information which you would like our committee to consider, or if you wish to discuss your complaint, please contact the investigating attorney by telephone or in writing as soon as possible.

After []'s investigation is complete, the [] district grievance committee will make a recommendation to the North Carolina State Bar Grievance Committee regarding whether or not there is probable cause to believe that [respondent attorney] violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct. Your complaint and the results of our investigation will be sent to the North Carolina State Bar at that time. The [] district grievance committee's recommendation is not binding upon the North Carolina State Bar Grievance Committee, which will make the final determination. You will be notified in writing when the [] district grievance committee's investigation is concluded.

Neither the investigating attorney nor any member of the [] district grievance committee can give you any legal advice or represent you regarding any underlying legal matter in which you may be involved. You may pursue any questions you have about your legal rights with an attorney of your own choice.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Chairperson
 District Grievance Committee

cc: PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
Director of Investigations
The N.C. State Bar

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01B .0214 LETTER TO INVESTIGATING ATTORNEY ASSIGNING GRIEVANCE

James Roe
 District Grievance Committee Member
Anywhere, N.C.

Re: Grievance of John Smith against Jane Doe
Our File No.

Dear Mr. Roe:

Enclosed you will find a copy of the grievance which I recently received regarding the above-captioned matter. Please investigate the complaint and provide a written report with your recommendations by [deadline].

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Chairperson
 District Grievance Committee

cc: PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
Director of Investigations
The N.C. State Bar

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01B .0215 LETTER TO COMPLAINANT FROM INVESTIGATING ATTORNEY

John Smith
Anywhere, N.C.

Re: Your complaint against Jane Doe
Our File No.

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am the member of the [] district grievance committee assigned to investigate your grievance against [respondent attorney]. It is part of my job to ensure that you have had a chance to explain your complaint and that the [] district grievance committee has copies of all of the documents which you believe relate to your complaint.

If you have other information or materials which you would like the [] district grievance committee to consider, or if you would like to discuss this matter, please contact me as soon as possible.

If you have already fully explained your complaint, you do not need to take any additional action regarding your grievance. The [] district grievance committee will notify you in writing when its investigation is complete. At that time, the matter will be forwarded to the North Carolina State Bar Grievance Committee in Raleigh for its final decision. You will be notified in writing of the North Carolina State Bar's decision.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

[] Investigating Member
[] District Grievance Committee

cc: PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
Chairperson, [] District Grievance Committee

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01B .0216 LETTER OF NOTICE TO RESPONDENT ATTORNEY

Ms. Jane Doe
Anywhere, N.C.

Re: Grievance of John Smith
Our File No. []

Dear Ms. Doe:

Enclosed you will find a copy of a grievance which has been filed against you by [complainant] and which was received in my office on [date]. As chairperson of the [] district grievance committee, I have asked [investigating attorney], a member of the committee, to investigate this grievance.

Please file a written response with [investigating attorney] within 15 days from receipt of this letter. Your response should provide a full and fair disclosure of all of the facts and circumstances relating to the matters set out in the grievance.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

[] Chairperson
[] District Grievance Committee

cc: PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
[] Investigating member
[] District Grievance Committee

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
Director of Investigations
N.C. State Bar

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
 Complainant

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01B .0217 LETTER TRANSMITTING COMPLETED FILE TO NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR

Director of Investigations
N.C. State Bar
P.O. Box 25908
Raleigh, N.C. 27611

Re: Grievance of John Smith
File No.

Dear Director:

The district grievance committee has completed its investigation in the above-listed matter. Based upon our investigation, the committee determined in its opinion that there is/is not probable cause to believe that the respondent violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct for the reasons set out in the enclosed report.

We are forwarding this matter for final determination by the North Carolina State Bar Grievance Committee along with the following materials:

1. The original grievance of [complainant].
2. A copy of the file of the investigating attorney.
3. The investigating attorney's report, which includes a summary of the facts and the reason(s) for the committee's decision.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if you need any additional information. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Chairperson
 District Grievance Committee

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

**SUBCHAPTER 01C - RULES GOVERNING THE BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS AND THE TRAINING OF
LAW STUDENTS**

SECTION .0100 - BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS

27 NCAC 01C .0101 ELECTION

- (a) The Board of Law Examiners shall consist of 11 members. The members are appointed for three-year terms to serve until expiration of the term, resignation, death, or other cause for termination of members' service.
- (b) The council, in making appointments to the Board of Law Examiners, shall make appointments for no more than four consecutive three-year terms, not counting any partial term which may have previously been served.
- (c) The council shall appoint board members for three-year terms at its annual meeting in October, with the term of service to begin on the following January 1. Appointment of a board member to complete an unexpired term shall be conducted at the next meeting of the council following the termination of service by the member and the giving of notice of the vacancy.
- (d) When vacancies occur for the Board of Law Examiners, notice shall be published in the official publication of the North Carolina State Bar giving the date by which any person desiring to make a suggestion for someone to be considered as a possible member of the Board of Law Examiners must submit the name to the North Carolina State Bar.
- (e) In considering an appointment to the Board of Law Examiners, the council may consult with current members of the Board of Law Examiners and consider factors such as geography, practice area, gender, and racial diversity.
- (f) No member of the council shall be a member of the Board of Law Examiners.
- (g) Any former Board of Law Examiners member being considered for appointment as emeritus member shall have served on the Board of Law Examiners for not less than five years.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-24;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. June 9, 2016.

27 NCAC 01C .0102 EXAMINATION OF APPLICANTS FOR LICENSE

All applicants for admission to the Bar shall first obtain a certificate or license from the Board of Law Examiners in accordance with the rules and regulations of that board.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-24;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01C .0103 ADMISSION TO PRACTICE

Upon receiving license to practice law from the Board of Law Examiners, the applicant shall be admitted to the practice thereof by taking the oath in the manner and form now provided by law.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-24;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01C .0104 APPROVAL OF RULES AND REGULATIONS OF BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS

The council shall, as soon as possible, after the presentation to it of rules and regulations for admission to the Bar, approve or disapprove such rules and regulations. The rules and regulations approved shall immediately be certified to the Supreme Court. Such rules and regulations as may not be approved by the council shall be the subject of further study and action, and for the purpose of study, the council and Board of Law Examiners may sit in joint session. No action, however, shall be taken by the joint meeting, but each shall act separately, and no rule or regulation shall be certified to the Supreme Court until approved by the council.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-24;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01C .0105 APPROVAL OF LAW SCHOOLS

Every applicant for admission to the North Carolina State Bar must meet the requirements set out in at least one of the numbered paragraphs below:

- (1) The applicant holds an LL.B or J.D. degree from a law school that was approved by the American Bar Association at the time the degree was conferred; or
- (2) Prior to August 1995, the applicant received an LL.B., J.D., LL.M., or S.J.D. degree from a law school that was approved by the council of the N.C. State Bar at the time the degree was conferred;
- (3) Prior to August 2005, the applicant received an LL.M or S.J.D. degree from a law school that was approved by the American Bar Association at the time the degree was conferred.

- (4) The applicant holds an LL.B. or J.D. degree from a law school that was approved for licensure purposes in another state of the United States or the District of Columbia and was licensed in such state or district.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-24;
Adopted March 3, 1999;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016; March 5, 2015; February 27, 2003.*

SECTION .0200 - RULES GOVERNING THE PRACTICAL TRAINING OF LAW STUDENTS

27 NCAC 01C .0201 PURPOSE

The rules in this subchapter are adopted for the following purposes: to support the development of experiential legal education programs at North Carolina's law schools in order that the law schools may provide their students with supervised practical training of varying kinds during the period of their formal legal education; to enable law students to obtain supervised practical training while serving as certified law students for government agencies; and to assist law schools in providing substantial opportunities for student participation and experiential education in pro bono service.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-7.1; 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: June 7, 2001; March 6, 2008; September 25, 2019; April 21, 2021.*

27 NCAC 01C .0202 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply to the terms used in this section:

- (a) Clinical legal education program - Experiential educational program that engages students in "real world" legal matters through supervised practice experience. Under the supervision of a faculty member or site supervisor who is accountable to the law school, students assume the role of a lawyer either as a protégé, lead counsel, or a member of a lawyer team.
- (b) Eligible persons - Persons who are unable financially to pay for legal advice or services as determined by a standard established by a judge of the General Court of Justice, a legal services organization, government entity, or a clinical legal education program. "Eligible persons" may include minors who are not financially independent; students enrolled in secondary and higher education schools who are not financially independent; non-profit organizations serving low-income communities; and other organizations financially unable to pay for legal advice or services.
- (c) Field placement - Practical training opportunities that place students in legal practice settings external to the law school. Students in a field placement represent clients or perform other lawyering roles under the supervision of practicing lawyers or other qualified legal professionals. Supervising attorneys provide direct feedback and guidance to the students. Site supervisors have administrative responsibility for the legal intern program at the field placement. Such practical training opportunities include the following:
- (1) Externships - Courses within a law school's clinical legal education program in which the law school places students in legal practice settings external to the law school. Faculty have overall responsibility for assuring the educational value of the learning in the field.
 - (2) Government internships - Practical training opportunities in which students are placed in government agencies. No law school credit is earned for such placements. A government internship may be facilitated by the student's law school or obtained by the student independently. Although not required, faculty oversight is encouraged to ensure the educational value of the placement.
 - (3) Internships - Practical training opportunities in which students are placed in legal practice settings external to the law school. No law school credit is earned for such placements. An internship may be facilitated by the student's law school or obtained by the student independently. Some faculty oversight through the law school's clinical legal education program is required.
- (d) Certified law student - A law student who is certified to work in conjunction with a supervising attorney to provide legal services to clients under the provisions of this subchapter.
- (e) Government agencies - The federal or state government, any local government, or any agency, department, unit, or other entity of federal, state, or local government, specifically including a public defender's office or a district attorney's office.
- (f) Law school - An ABA accredited law school or a law school actively seeking accreditation from the ABA and licensed by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina. If ABA accreditation is not obtained by a law school so licensed within three years of the commencement of classes, legal interns may not practice, pursuant to these rules, with any clinic of the law school.

(g) Law school clinic - Courses within a law school's clinical legal education program that place students in a legal practice setting operated by the law school. Students in a law school clinic assume the role of a lawyer representing actual clients or performing other lawyering roles. Supervision of students is provided by faculty employed by the law school (full-time, part-time, adjunct) who are active members of the North Carolina State Bar or another bar as appropriate for the legal matters undertaken.

(h) Legal services organization - A nonprofit North Carolina organization organized to operate in accordance with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 84-5.1.

(i) Pro bono activity - An opportunity while in law school for students to provide legal services to those unable to pay, or otherwise under a disability or disadvantage, consistent with the objectives of Rule 6.1 of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

(j) Rules of Professional Conduct - The Rules of Professional Conduct adopted by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar, approved by the North Carolina Supreme Court, and in effect at the time of application of the rules in this subchapter.

(k) Site supervisor - The attorney at a student practice placement who assumes administrative responsibility for the certified law student program at the placement and provides the statements to the State Bar and the certified law student's law school required by Rule .0205(b) of this subchapter. A site supervisor may also be a supervising attorney at a student practice placement.

(l) Supervising attorney - An active member of the North Carolina State Bar, or an attorney who is licensed in another jurisdiction as appropriate for the legal work to be undertaken, who has practiced law as a full-time occupation for at least two years, and who supervises one or more certified law students pursuant to the requirements of the rules in this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-7.1; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: June 7, 2001; March 6, 2002; March 6, 2008; September 25, 2019; April 21, 2021; December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01C .0203 ELIGIBILITY

To engage in activities permitted by these rules, a law student must satisfy the following requirements:

- (a) be enrolled as a J.D. or LL.M. student in a law school approved by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar;
- (b) be certified in writing by a representative of his or her law school, authorized by the dean of the law school to provide such certification, as being of good character with requisite legal ability and legal education to perform as a certified law student, which education shall include satisfaction of the prerequisites for participation in the clinic, externship, or other student practice placement;
- (c) be introduced by an attorney admitted to practice in the tribunal or agency to every judicial official who will preside over a matter in which the student will appear, and, pursuant to Rule .0206(c) of this subchapter, obtain the tribunal's or agency's consent to appear subject to any limitations imposed by the presiding judicial official; such introductions do not have to occur in open court and the consent of the judicial official may be oral or written;
- (d) neither ask for nor receive any compensation or remuneration of any kind from any eligible person to whom he or she renders services, but this shall not prevent an attorney, legal services organization, law school, or government agency from paying compensation to the law student or charging or collecting a fee for legal services performed by such law student; and
- (e) attest in writing that he or she has read the North Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct and is familiar with the opinions interpretive thereof.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-7.1; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: June 7, 2001; March 6, 2008; September 25, 2019; April 21, 2021.

27 NCAC 01C .0204 FORM AND DURATION OF CERTIFICATION

Upon receipt of the written materials required by Rule .0203(b) and (e) and Rule .0205(b), the North Carolina State Bar shall certify that the law student may serve as a certified law student. The certification shall be subject to the following limitations:

- (a) Duration. The certification shall be effective for 18 consecutive months or until the announcement of the results of the first bar examination following the certified law student's graduation whichever is earlier. If the certified law student passes the bar examination, the certification shall remain in effect until the

certified law student is sworn-in by a court and admitted to the bar. For the duration of the certification, the certification shall be transferrable from one student practice placement or law school clinic to another student practice placement or law school clinic, provided that (i) all student practice placements are approved by the law school prior to the certified law student's graduation, and (ii) the supervision and filing requirements in Rule .0205 of this subchapter are at all times satisfied.

- (b) **Withdrawal of Certification.** The certification shall be withdrawn by the State Bar, without hearing or a showing of cause, upon receipt of
- (1) notice from a representative of the certified law student's law school, authorized to act by the dean of the law school, that the student has not graduated but is no longer enrolled;
 - (2) notice from a representative of the certified law student's law school, authorized to act by the dean of the law school, that the student is no longer in good standing at the law school;
 - (3) notice from a supervising attorney that the supervising attorney is no longer supervising the certified law student and that no other qualified attorney has assumed the supervision of the student; or
 - (4) notice from a judge before whom the certified law student has appeared that the certification should be withdrawn.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-7.1; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: June 7, 2001; September 25, 2019; April 21, 2021.*

27 NCAC 01C .0205 SUPERVISION

(a) **Supervision Requirements.** A supervising attorney shall:

- (1) for a law school clinic, concurrently supervise an unlimited number of certified law students if the supervising attorney is a full-time, part-time, or adjunct member of a law school's faculty or staff whose primary responsibility is supervising certified law students in a law school clinic and, further provided, the number of certified law students concurrently supervised is not so large as to compromise the effective and beneficial practical training of the certified law students or the competent representation of clients;
- (2) for a student practice placement, concurrently supervise no more than two certified law students; however, a greater number of certified law students may be concurrently supervised by a single supervising attorney if (i) an appropriate faculty member of each certified law student's law school determines, in his or her reasoned discretion, that the effective and beneficial practical training of the certified law students will not be compromised, and (ii) the supervising attorney determines that the competent representation of clients will not be compromised;
- (3) assume personal and professional responsibility for any work undertaken by a certified law student while under his or her supervision;
- (4) assist and counsel with a certified law student in the activities permitted by these rules and review such activities with the certified law student, all to the extent required for the proper practical training of the student and the competent representation of the client;
- (5) read, approve, and personally sign any pleadings or other papers prepared by a certified law student prior to the filing thereof, and read and approve any documents prepared by a certified law student for execution by a client or third party prior to the execution thereof; and
- (6) for externships and internships (other than placements at government agencies), ensure that any activities by the certified law student that are authorized by Rule .0206 are limited to representations of eligible persons.

(b) **Filing Requirements.**

- (1) Prior to commencing supervision, a supervising attorney in a law school clinic shall provide a signed statement to the North Carolina State Bar (i) assuming responsibility for the supervision of identified certified law students, (ii) stating the period during which the supervising attorney expects to supervise the activities of the identified certified law students, and (iii) certifying that the supervising attorney will adequately supervise the certified law students in accordance with these rules.
- (2) Prior to the commencement of a student practice placement for a certified law student, the site supervisor shall provide a signed statement to the North Carolina State Bar and to the certified law student's law school (i) assuming responsibility for the administration of the field placement in compliance with these rules, (ii) identifying the participating certified law student and stating the period during which the certified

law student is expected to participate in the program at the placement, (iii) identifying the supervising attorney at the placement, and (iv) certifying that the supervising attorney will adequately supervise the certified law student in accordance with these rules.

- (3) A supervising attorney in a law school clinic and a site supervisor for a certified law student program at a student practice placement shall notify the North Carolina State Bar in writing promptly whenever the supervision of a certified law student concludes prior to the designated period of supervision.

(c) Responsibilities of Law School Clinic in Absence of Certified Law Student. During any period when a certified law student is not available to provide representation due to law school seasonal breaks, graduation, or other reason, the supervising attorney shall maintain the status quo of a client matter and shall take action as necessary to protect the interests of the client until the certified law student is available or a new certified law student is assigned to the matter. During law school seasonal breaks, or other periods when a certified law student is not available, if a law school clinic or a supervising attorney is presented with an inquiry from an eligible person or a legal matter that may be appropriate for representation by a certified law student, the representation may be undertaken by a supervising attorney to preserve the matter for subsequent representation by a certified law student. Communications by a supervising attorney with a prospective client to determine whether the prospective client is eligible for clinic representation may include providing immediate legal advice or information even if it is subsequently determined that the matter is not appropriate for clinic representation.

(d) Independent Legal Practice. Nothing in these rules prohibits a supervising attorney in a law school clinic from providing legal services to third parties outside of the scope of the supervising attorney's employment by the law school operating the law school clinic.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-7.1; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: June 7, 2001; March 6, 2002; March 6, 2008; September 24, 2015; September 25, 2019; April 21, 2021.

27 NCAC 01C .0206 ACTIVITIES

(a) A properly certified law student may engage in the activities provided in this rule under the supervision of an attorney qualified and acting in accordance with the provisions of Rule .0205 of this subchapter.

(b) Without the presence of the supervising attorney, a certified law student may give advice to a client, including a government agency, on legal matters provided that the certified law student gives a clear prior explanation that the certified law student is not an attorney and the supervising attorney has given the certified law student permission to render legal advice in the subject area involved.

(c) A certified law student may represent an eligible person, the state in criminal prosecutions, a criminal defendant who is represented by the public defender, or a government agency in any proceeding before a federal, state, or local tribunal, including an administrative agency, if prior consent is obtained from the tribunal or agency upon application of the supervising attorney. Each appearance before the tribunal or agency shall be subject to any limitations imposed by the tribunal or agency including, but not limited to, the requirement that the supervising attorney physically accompany the certified law student.

(d) In all cases under this rule in which a certified law student makes an appearance before a tribunal or agency on behalf of a client who is an individual, the certified law student shall have the written consent in advance of the client. The client shall be given a clear explanation, prior to the giving of his or her consent, that the certified law student is not an attorney. This consent shall be filed with the tribunal and made a part of the record in the case. In all cases in which a certified law student makes an appearance before a tribunal or agency on behalf a government agency, the consent of the government agency shall be presumed if the certified law student is participating in a law school externship program or an internship program of the government agency. A statement advising the court of the certified law student's participation in an externship or internship program at the government agency shall be filed with the tribunal and made a part of the record in the case.

(e) In all cases under this rule in which a certified law student is permitted to make an appearance before a tribunal or agency, subject to any limitations imposed by the tribunal, the certified law student may engage in all activities appropriate to the representation of the client, including, without limitation, selection of and argument to the jury, examination and cross-examination of witnesses, motions and arguments thereon, and giving notice of appeal.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: June 7, 2001; March 6, 2002; March 6, 2008; April 21, 2021.

27 NCAC 01C .0207 USE OF STUDENT'S NAME

- (a) A certified law student's name may properly
- (1) be printed or typed on briefs, pleadings, and other similar documents on which the certified law student has worked with or under the direction of the supervising attorney, provided the certified law student is clearly identified as a student certified under these rules, and provided further that the certified law student shall not sign his or her name to such briefs, pleadings, or other similar documents;
 - (2) be signed to letters written on the letterhead of the supervising attorney, legal aid clinic, or government agency, provided there appears below the certified law student's signature a clear identification that the student is certified under these rules. An appropriate designation is "Certified Law Student under the Supervision of [supervising attorney]", and
 - (3) be printed on a business card, provided the name of the supervising attorney also appears on the business card and there appears below the certified law student's name a clear statement that the student is certified under these rules. An appropriate designation is "Certified Law Student under the Supervision of [supervising attorney]."
- (b) A student's name may not appear on the letterhead of a supervising attorney, legal aid clinic, or government agency.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: June 7, 2001; March 6, 2008; October 7, 2010; April 21, 2021.

27 NCAC 01C .0208 STUDENT PRACTICE PLACEMENTS

- (a) A law student participating in a student practice placement at an organization, entity, law firm, or government agency shall be certified if the law student will (i) provide legal advice or services in matters governed by North Carolina law to eligible persons outside the organization, entity, law firm, or government agency where the student is placed, or (ii) appear before any North Carolina tribunal or agency on behalf of an eligible person or a government agency.
- (b) Supervision of a certified law student enrolled in a student practice placement may be shared by two or more attorneys employed by the organization, entity, law firm, or government agency, provided one attorney acts as site supervisor, assuming administrative responsibility for the certified law student program at the placement and filing with the State Bar and the certified law student's law school the statements required by Rule .0205(b) of this subchapter. All supervising attorneys at a student practice placement shall comply with the requirements of Rule .0205(a).

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-7.1; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Rule entitled "Miscellaneous" rep. Eff. June 7, 2001;
Adopted Eff. September 25, 2019;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: April 21, 2021.

27 NCAC 01C .0209 RELATIONSHIP OF LAW SCHOOL AND CLINICS; RESPONSIBILITY UPON DEPARTURE OF SUPERVISING ATTORNEY OR CLOSURE OF CLINIC

- (a) Relationship to Other Clinics. The clinics that are a part of a clinical legal education program at a law school may each operate as an independent entity (the "independent clinic model") or they may operate collectively as one entity with each clinic acting as a department or division of the entity (the "unified clinic model"). In the independent clinic model, clinics function independently of each other, including the maintenance of separate offices and separate conflicts-checking and case management systems. In the unified clinic model, clinics may share offices as well as conflicts-checking and case management systems.
- (b) Application of the Rules of Professional Conduct. For the purposes of applying the Rules of Professional Conduct, each law school clinic operated pursuant to the independent clinic model shall be considered one law firm and clinics operated pursuant to the unified clinic model shall collectively be considered one law firm.
- (c) Relationship with Law School. The relationship between law school clinics and the law school in which they operate shall be managed in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Rules of Professional Conduct. Procedures shall be established by both the clinics and the law school that are reasonably adequate to protect confidential client information from disclosure including disclosure to the law school administration, non-participating law school faculty and staff, and non-participating students of the law school. The rule of imputed disqualification, as stated in Rule 1.10(a) of the Rules of

Professional Conduct, shall not apply to the law school administrators, non-participating law school faculty and staff, and non-participating law school students if reasonable efforts are made to prevent the inadvertent or unauthorized disclosure of, or unauthorized access to, information relating to the representation of clients. See Rule 1.6(c) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

(d) Responsibility for Maintenance of Client Files. Client files shall be maintained and safeguarded by a law school clinic in accordance with the Rules of Professional Conduct and the ethics opinions interpretative thereof. Closed client files shall be returned to the client or shall be safeguarded and maintained by a law school clinic until disposal is permitted under the Rules of Professional Conduct. See RPC 209.

(e) Engagement Letter. In addition to the consent agreement required by Rule .0206(d) of this section for any representation of an individual client in a matter before a tribunal, a written engagement letter or memorandum of understanding with each client is recommended. The writing should state the general nature of the legal services to be provided and explain the roles and responsibilities of the clinic, the supervising attorney, and the certified law student. See Rule 1.5, cmt. [2] of the Rules of Professional Conduct ("A written statement concerning the terms of the engagement reduces the possibility of misunderstanding.")

(f) Responsibility upon Departure of Supervising Attorney. Upon the departure of a supervising attorney from a law school clinic, the administration of the law school and of the clinic shall promptly identify a replacement supervising attorney for any active case in which no other supervising attorney is participating. In such cases, the departing attorney and the clinic administration shall protect the interests of all affected clients by taking appropriate steps to preserve the status quo of the legal matters of affected clients, consistent with the Rules of Professional Conduct and the ethics opinions interpretative thereof. If the departing attorney will not continue the representation after departure from the clinic, the attorney shall comply with Rule 1.16 of the Rules of Professional Conduct and all court rules for withdrawal from representation. Affected clients shall be notified and advised that (i) they have the right to counsel of choice (which may include the departing attorney if the departing attorney intends to engage in legal practice outside of the law school clinic); (ii) their file will be transferred to the new supervising attorney in the absence of other instructions from the client; and (iii) they may instruct the clinic to mail or deliver the file to the client or to transfer the file to legal counsel outside of the clinic. If instructed by a client, a file shall be promptly returned to the client or transferred to authorized legal counsel outside of the clinic.

(g) Responsibility upon Closure of a Law School Clinic. If a law school clinic is closed for any reason, the supervising attorney, with support from the law school, shall take appropriate steps to preserve the status quo of the legal matters of clients, consistent with the Rules of Professional Conduct and the ethics opinions interpretative thereof. The administration of the law school and of the clinic shall promptly notify all affected clients that (i) they have the right to counsel of choice (which may include the supervising attorney if the supervising attorney will engage in legal practice after closure of the clinic); (ii) the file will be mailed to or delivered to the client and the supervising attorney will withdraw from representation in the absence of other instructions from the client; and (iii) they may instruct the clinic to transfer the file to authorized legal counsel outside of the clinic (which may include the supervising attorney). If the supervising attorney will not continue the representation after closure of the clinic, the attorney shall comply with Rule 1.16 of the Rules of Professional Conduct and all court rules for withdrawal from representation.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Rule entitled "Dean's Certificate" repealed Eff. June 7, 2001;
Adopted Eff. September 25, 2019;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: April 21, 2021.*

27 NCAC 01C .0210 PRO BONO ACTIVITIES

(a) Pro Bono Activities for Law Students. Pro bono activities for law students may be facilitated by a law school acting under the auspices of a clinical legal education program or another program or department of the law school. As used in this rule, "auspices" means administrative or programmatic support or supervision.

(b) Student Certification Not Required. Regardless of whether the pro bono activity is provided under the auspices of a clinical legal education program or another program or department of a law school, a law student participating in a pro bono activity made available by a law school is not required to be certified if

- (1) the law student will not perform any legal service; or
- (2) all of the following conditions are satisfied: (i) the student will perform specifically delegated substantive legal services for third parties (clients) under the direct supervision of an attorney who is an active member of the North Carolina State Bar or licensed in another jurisdiction as appropriate to the legal services to be undertaken (the responsible attorney); (ii) the legal services shall not include representation of clients

before a tribunal or agency; (iii) the responsible attorney is personally and professionally responsible for the representation of the clients and for the law student's work product; and (iv) the role of the law student as an assistant to the responsible attorney is clearly explained to each client in advance of the performance of any legal service for the client by the law student.

(c) Law School Faculty and Staff Providing Pro Bono Services Under Auspices of a Clinical Legal Education Program. Any member of the law school's faculty or staff who is an active member of the North Carolina State Bar or licensed in another jurisdiction as appropriate to the legal work to be undertaken may serve as the responsible attorney for a pro bono activity if the activity is provided to eligible persons under the auspices of the law school's clinical legal education program and the responsible attorney complies with the relevant supervision requirements set forth in Rule .0205(a)(2)-(5) of this subchapter.

(d) Responsibility for Client File. Unless otherwise specified in this rule, if a client file is generated by a pro bono activity, it shall be maintained and safeguarded by the responsible attorney in compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct and the ethics opinions interpretative thereof. If the pro bono activity is provided under the auspices of a clinical legal education program and the responsible attorney is a member of the law school's faculty or staff, the client file shall be maintained and safeguarded by the clinical legal education program in compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct and the Rule .0209(d). If the pro bono activity is sponsored by a legal services organization or government agency, the legal services organization or government agency shall maintain and safeguard the client file. If the pro bono activity is sponsored by more than one legal services organization or government agency, the co-sponsors shall determine which entity shall maintain and safeguard the client file and shall so inform the client.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-7.1; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Rule entitled "Withdrawal of Dean's Certificate" rep. Eff. June 7, 2001;
Adopted Eff. September 25, 2019;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: April 21, 2021.*

SUBCHAPTER 01D – RULES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR

SECTION .0100 – PROCEDURES FOR RULING ON QUESTIONS OF LEGAL ETHICS

27 NCAC 01D .0101 DEFINITIONS

- (a) "Assistant executive director" shall mean the assistant executive director of the Bar.
- (b) "Attorney" shall mean any active member of the Bar.
- (c) "Bar" shall mean the North Carolina State Bar.
- (d) "Chairperson" shall mean the chairperson, or in his or her absence, the vice-chairperson of the Ethics Committee of the Bar.
- (e) "Committee" shall mean the Ethics Committee of the Bar.
- (f) "Council" shall mean the council of the Bar.
- (g) "Ethics advisory" shall mean legal ethics opinion issued in writing by the executive director, the assistant executive director, or a designated member of the Bar's staff counsel. All ethics advisories shall be subsequently reviewed and approved, withdrawn or modified by the committee. Ethics advisories shall be designated by the letters "EA", numbered by year and order of issuance, and kept on file at the Bar.
- (h) "Ethics decision" shall mean a written ethics opinion issued by the council in response to a request for an ethics opinion which, because of its special facts or for other reasons, does not warrant issuance of a formal ethics opinion. Ethics decisions shall be designated by the letters "ED," numbered by year and order of issuance, and kept on file at the Bar.
- (i) "Executive director" shall mean the executive director of the Bar.
- (j) "Formal ethics opinion" shall mean a published opinion issued by the council to provide ethical guidance for attorneys and to establish a principle of ethical conduct. A formal ethics opinion adopted under the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct (effective July 24, 1997, and as comprehensively revised in 2003) shall be designated as a "Formal Ethics Opinion" and numbers by year and order of issuance. Formal ethics opinions adopted under the repealed Rules of Professional Conduct (effective October 7, 1985 to July 23, 1997) are designated by the letters "RPC" numbered serially. Formal ethics opinions adopted under the repealed Code of Professional Conduct (effective January 1, 1974 to October 6, 1985) are designated by the letters "CPR" and numbered serially. Formal ethics opinion adopted under the repealed Rules of Professional Conduct

and the repealed Code of Professional Conduct are binding unless overruled by a provision of the Bar's current code of ethics, a revision of the rule of ethics upon which the opinion is based, or a subsequent formal ethics opinion on point.

(k) "Grievance Committee" shall mean the Grievance Committee of the Bar.

(l) "Informal ethics advisory" shall mean an informal ethics opinion communicated orally or via electronic mail by the executive director, the assistant executive director, or a designated member of the Bar's Legal staff counsel. A written record documenting the name of the inquiring attorney, the date of the informal ethics advisory, and the substance of the advice given shall be kept on file at the Bar. An informal ethics advisory is not binding upon the Bar in a subsequent disciplinary proceeding.

(m) "President" shall mean the president of the Bar, or, in his or her absence, the presiding officer of the council.

(n) "Published" shall mean published for comment in the North Carolina State Bar Newsletter (prior to fall 1996), the North Carolina State Bar Journal (fall of 1996 and thereafter) or other appropriate publications of the North Carolina State Bar.

(o) "Revised Rules of Professional Conduct" shall mean the code of ethics of the Bar effective July 24, 1997, and as comprehensively revised in 2003.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 5, 2004; March 5, 1998.

27 NCAC 01D .0102 REQUESTS FOR LEGAL ETHICS OPINIONS AND ETHICS ADVISORIES (GENERAL PROVISIONS)

(a) Any attorney or citizen may request the Bar to rule on actual or contemplated professional conduct of an attorney in the form and manner provided hereinafter. The grant or denial of the request rests with the discretion of the executive director, assistant executive director, committee, or the council.

(b) Attorneys may initiate a request for an ethics advisory either in writing, by telephone, or in person regarding conduct which they contemplate and in good faith believe is either a routine matter or requires urgent action in order to protect some legal right, privilege, or interest. If the request is initiated verbally, the requesting attorney must promptly confirm the request in writing.

(c) A request for an ethics advisory, ethics decision, or legal ethics opinion shall present in detail to the executive director or assistant executive director all operative facts upon which the request is based. All requests for either a legal ethics opinion or an ethics decision shall be made in writing.

(d) Any citizen may request either a legal ethics opinion or an ethics decision through any councilor of the judicial district of his or her residence or principal place of business except when the request is regarding the propriety of said councilor's conduct, in which case the citizen may make the request through another councilor in the district or a councilor in an adjoining judicial district.

(e) Any attorney, including a councilor acting pursuant to Paragraph (d) hereinabove, who requests either a legal ethics opinion or an ethics decision concerning acts or contemplated professional conduct of another attorney, shall state the name of that attorney and identify all persons who the requesting attorney has reason to believe would be substantially affected by the question or questions advanced. The councilor shall exercise good faith in preparing the request on behalf of the citizen.

(f) If an attorney willfully fails to identify an attorney who the requesting attorney has reason to believe would be substantially affected by the requested ethics advisory, legal ethics opinion, or ethics decision, his or her willful failure may be treated as misconduct. The requesting attorney shall receive no right, benefit, or immunity under any opinion which has been issued under such circumstances, and the opinion shall be reexamined de novo under the procedures delineated in Rule .0104 of this Subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .0103 ETHICS ADVISORIES

(a) The executive director, assistant executive director, or designated staff counsel may honor or deny a request for an informal ethics advisory. Except as provided in Rule .0102(b), an attorney requesting an opinion concerning another attorney's professional conduct, past conduct, or matters of first impression shall be asked to submit a written inquiry for referral to the committee. An attorney requesting an opinion involving matters of widespread interest to the Bar or particularly complex factual circumstances may also be asked to submit a written inquiry for referral to the committee.

(b) The Bar's program for providing informal ethics advisories to inquiring attorneys is a designated lawyer's assistance program approved by the Bar and information received by the executive director, assistant executive director, or designated

staff counsel from an attorney seeking an informal ethics advisory shall be confidential information pursuant to Rule 1.6(c) of the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct (2003); provided, however, such confidential information may be disclosed as allowed by Rule 1.6(b) and as necessary to respond to a false or misleading statement made about an informal ethics advisory. Further, if an attorney's response to a grievance proceeding relies in whole or in part upon the receipt of an informal ethics advisory, confidential information may be disclosed to Bar counsel, the Grievance Committee or other appropriate disciplinary authority.

(c) An ethics advisory issued by the executive director or assistant executive director shall be promulgated under the authority of the committee and in accordance with such guidelines as the committee may establish and prescribe from time to time.

(d) An ethics advisory shall sanction or disapprove only the matter in issue, not otherwise serve as precedent and not be published.

(e) Ethics advisories shall be reviewed periodically by the committee. If, upon review, a majority of the committee present and voting decides that an ethics advisory should be withdrawn, the requesting attorney shall be notified in writing of the committee's decision by the executive director or assistant executive director. Until such notification, the attorney shall be deemed to have acted ethically and in good faith if he or she acts pursuant to the ethics advisory which is later withdrawn or modified.

(f) If an inquiring attorney disagrees with the ethics advisory issued to him or her, the attorney may request reconsideration of the ethics advisory by writing to the committee prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the committee.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 5, 2004; March 5, 1998.*

27 NCAC 01D .0104 LEGAL ETHICS OPINIONS AND DECISIONS

(a) Requests for legal ethics opinions or ethics decisions shall be made in writing and submitted to the executive director or assistant executive director who, after determining that a request is in compliance with Rule .0102 of this Subchapter, shall transmit the request to the chairperson of the committee.

(b) If a legal ethics opinion or ethics decision is requested concerning contemplated or actual conduct of another attorney, the chairperson shall notify that attorney and provide him or her with the opportunity to be heard, along with the person who requested the opinion, under such guidelines as may be established by the committee. The chairperson shall notify any additional person or group he or she deems appropriate and provide them an opportunity to be heard.

(c) Upon initial consideration of the request, by vote of a majority of the members of the committee present at the meeting, the committee shall prepare a written proposed response to the inquiry and shall determine whether to issue the response as a proposed ethics decision or a proposed formal ethics opinion. Prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the committee, all proposed formal ethics opinions shall be published and all proposed ethics decisions shall be circulated to the members of the council.

(d) Prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the committee, any interested person or group may submit a written request to reconsider a proposed formal ethics opinion or a proposed ethics decision and may ask to be heard by the committee. The committee, under such guidelines as it may adopt, may allow or deny such request.

(e) Upon reconsideration of a proposed formal ethics opinion or proposed ethics decision, the committee may, by vote of not less than a majority of the duly appointed members of the committee, revise the proposed formal ethics opinion or proposed ethics decision. Prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the committee, all revised proposed formal ethics opinions shall be published and all revised proposed ethics decisions shall be circulated to the members of the council.

(f) Upon completion of the process, the committee shall determine, by a vote of not less than a majority of the duly appointed members of the committee, whether to transmit a proposed formal ethics opinion or proposed ethics decision to the council with a recommendation to adopt.

(g) Any interested person or group may request to be heard by the council prior to a vote on the adoption of a proposed formal ethics opinion or ethics decision. Whether permitted to appear before the council or not, the person or group has the right to file a written brief with the council under such rules as may be established by the council.

(h) The council's action on a proposed formal ethics opinion or ethics decision shall be determined by a vote of the majority of the council present and voting. Notice of such action shall be provided to interested persons by the method deemed most appropriate by the chairperson.

(i) A formal ethics opinion or ethics decision may be reconsidered or withdrawn by the council pursuant to rules which it may establish from time to time.

(j) To vote, a member of the committee must be physically present at a meeting.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 5, 2004; March 8, 1998.

27 NCAC 01D .0105 PROCEDURES FOR MEETINGS OF THE ETHICS COMMITTEE

(a) Consent Agenda. The agenda for a meeting of the committee shall include a consent agenda consisting of those proposed formal ethics opinions, proposed ethics decisions, and ethics advisories (collectively "proposed opinions") published, circulated, or mailed during the preceding quarter that the chairperson, vice-chair, and staff counsel agree do not warrant discussion by the full committee.

(b) Vote on Consent Agenda. The consent agenda shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the committee following the consideration of administrative matters. Any committee member may make a non-debatable motion to remove an item from the consent agenda for separate discussion and vote. The motion must receive an affirmative vote of one-third of all of the duly appointed members of the committee in order for an item to be removed from the consent agenda. The items remaining upon the consent agenda shall be considered together upon a non-debatable motion to approve the remaining items on the consent agenda. The motion must pass by a vote of not less than a majority of the duly appointed members of the committee pursuant to Rule .0104(f) of this Subchapter. All items on a consent agenda so approved shall be transmitted to the council with a recommendation to adopt.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 11, 2010.

SECTION .0200 - PROCEDURES FOR THE AUTHORIZED PRACTICE COMMITTEE

27 NCAC 01D .0201 GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) The Authorized Practice Committee is a standing committee of the council. The committee is comprised of councilors and advisory members appointed by the president. All members may vote on all matters coming before the committee unless prohibited by other rules of the State Bar.

(b) The purpose of the Authorized Practice Committee is to protect the public from the unauthorized or unlawful practice of law by investigating information received about the possible unauthorized practice of law, by seeking compliance with the law, and by seeking enforcement of the law when necessary.

(c) The Authorized Practice Committee may issue advisory opinions concerning questions of significant interest to the public, the bar, and the courts on what constitutes the unauthorized practice of law.

(d) The Authorized Practice Committee oversees the counsel's administration of the rules for registration of prepaid legal services plans and for online document providers, and directs the counsel to take such action as is necessary to enforce those rules.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-37;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 3, 2000; March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .0202 PROCEDURE

The Authorized Practice Committee operates under the procedures set forth in these rules.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-37;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .0203 DEFINITIONS

Subject to additional definitions contained in other provisions of this subchapter, the following words and phrases, when used in this subchapter, have the meanings set forth in this Rule, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

- (1) Chair - the councilor appointed by the president to serve as chair of the Authorized Practice Committee of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (2) Complainant - any person who has complained to the North Carolina State Bar alleging that the conduct of any person, firm, or corporation constitutes the unauthorized practice of law in North Carolina.

- (3) Complaint - information submitted to the North Carolina State Bar alleging the unauthorized practice of law.
- (4) Council - the Council of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (5) Councilor - a member of the Council of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (6) Counsel - the counsel of the North Carolina State Bar or any attorney appointed by the counsel to provide legal services to the North Carolina State Bar.
- (7) Court or courts of this state - a court authorized and established by the Constitution or laws of the State of North Carolina.
- (8) Investigation - the gathering of information with respect to a complaint.
- (9) Investigator - any person designated by the committee or the counsel to assist in the investigation of a complaint.
- (10) Letter of notice - a communication sent by the committee to a respondent setting forth a summary of conduct that is alleged to constitute the unauthorized practice of law seeking a response to the allegations.
- (11) Office of the counsel - the office and staff maintained by the counsel of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (12) Office of the secretary - the office and staff maintained by the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (13) Probable Cause - a finding by the Authorized Practice Committee that there is reasonable cause to believe that a respondent has engaged in the unauthorized practice of law.
- (14) Respondent - any person, firm, or corporation alleged to have engaged in the unauthorized practice of law.
- (15) Secretary - the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (16) Vice-chair - the councilor appointed by the president to serve as the vice-chair of the Authorized Practice Committee of the North Carolina State Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-37;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 3, 2000; October 6, 2004; March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .0204 STATE BAR COUNCIL - POWERS AND DUTIES

The Council of the North Carolina State Bar shall have the power and duty to supervise the conduct of the Authorized Practice Committee in accordance with the provisions of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-37;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 3, 2000; March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .0205 CHAIR OF THE AUTHORIZED PRACTICE COMMITTEE - POWERS AND DUTIES

(a) The chair shall have the power and duty:

- (1) to supervise the activities of the counsel related to the conduct of the committee;
- (2) to authorize the counsel to initiate investigations upon receipt of information indicating the possible unauthorized practice of law in North Carolina;
- (3) to authorize the counsel to forego an investigation under such circumstances as the chair deems appropriate;
- (4) to recommend, or authorize the counsel to recommend, an appropriate disposition of a complaint;
- (5) to direct letters of notice to respondents or to authorize the counsel to issue letters of notice in such cases or under such circumstances as the chair deems appropriate;
- (6) to notify, or authorize the counsel to notify, any complainant, and any respondent who was notified of any investigation, of the committee's disposition of a complaint;
- (7) to issue subpoenas in the name of the North Carolina State Bar or to direct the secretary to issue such subpoenas;
- (8) to administer oaths or affirmations to witnesses;
- (9) to verify court pleadings filed by the North Carolina State Bar seeking enforcement of the prohibitions on the unauthorized practice of law.

(b) The vice-chair shall perform the functions of the chair of the committee in any matter when the chair is absent or disqualified. If both the chair and the vice-chair are absent or disqualified, a councilor designated by the president shall serve as acting chair.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-37;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 3, 2000; March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .0206 AUTHORIZED PRACTICE COMMITTEE - POWERS AND DUTIES

The Authorized Practice Committee shall have the power and duty:

- (1) to direct the counsel to investigate any alleged unauthorized practice of law in this State by any person, firm, or corporation;
- (2) to recommend to the Executive Committee that the counsel file a lawsuit against a respondent seeking to enjoin the unauthorized practice of law;
- (3) to dismiss a complaint when there is insufficient evidence to show a violation of the law prohibiting the unauthorized practice of law;
- (4) to issue a letter of caution to a respondent in a case in which the committee concludes that:
 - (a) there is probable cause to believe respondent has engaged in the unauthorized practice of law in North Carolina, but
 - (i) respondent has agreed to refrain from engaging in the conduct in the future or the committee believes respondent will stop engaging in the conduct as a result of receiving the letter of caution;
 - (ii) respondent is unlikely to engage in the conduct again; or
 - (iii) neither referral to a district attorney nor injunction proceedings are warranted under the circumstances; or
 - (b) the evidence is insufficient to establish probable cause that respondent has engaged in the unauthorized practice of law in North Carolina, but the committee finds it appropriate to caution the respondent because the conduct could potentially lead to a violation of the law;
- (5) to direct the counsel to stop an investigation and take no action;
- (6) to refer a matter to another regulatory or licensing authority; to a law enforcement agency, including a district attorney, for criminal prosecution; or to the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar; and
- (7) to issue proposed advisory opinions for adoption by the council concerning whether identified activities of significant public interest constitute the unauthorized practice of law in North Carolina.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-37;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 20, 1995; February 3, 2000; October 6, 2004;
March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .0207 COUNSEL - POWERS AND DUTIES

The counsel shall have the power and duty:

- (1) to initiate an investigation concerning the alleged unauthorized practice of law upon receipt of a complaint or upon receiving information from any other source indicating the possible unauthorized practice of law;
- (2) to direct a letter of notice to a respondent;
- (3) to make a recommendation to the committee on the disposition of a complaint;
- (4) to prosecute before the courts all actions to enjoin the unauthorized practice of law as may be authorized by the Executive Committee or the council;
- (5) to maintain records of all matters processed by the counsel on behalf of the committee and of the disposition thereof, pursuant to the records retention policies of the North Carolina State Bar; and
- (6) to perform such other duties incident to the operation of the committee as the president, the chair, the committee, or the council may direct.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-37;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 3, 2000; March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .0208 SUING FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

- (a) If the Authorized Practice Committee recommends that the North Carolina State Bar seek injunctive relief to prevent the unauthorized practice of law, the chair will report the recommendation to the Executive Committee.
- (b) If the Executive Committee decides to adopt the recommendation of the Authorized Practice Committee, it shall direct the counsel to prepare and file the necessary pleadings in the appropriate tribunal.
- (c) If the Executive Committee decides not to adopt the recommendation of the Authorized Practice Committee, the council will decide whether to authorize prosecution of the matter.
- (d) If the council decides not to adopt the recommendation of the Authorized Practice Committee, the file shall be referred back to the Authorized Practice Committee for alternative disposition.
- (e) If probable cause exists to believe that a respondent is engaged in the unauthorized practice of law and the harmful nature of the conduct is such that immediate action is needed to protect the public interest before the next quarterly meeting of the Authorized Practice Committee, the chair, with the approval of the president, may direct the counsel to file a complaint or petition in the name of the North Carolina State Bar in the appropriate tribunal seeking such temporary, preliminary, and permanent relief as is warranted.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-37;
 Approved by the Supreme Court February 3, 2000;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 20, 2024.*

SECTION .0300 - DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN

27 NCAC 01D .0301 THE DISASTER RESPONSE TEAM

- (a) The disaster response team should be composed of the following:
 - (1) the president of the State Bar, or if the president is unavailable, another officer of the State Bar;
 - (2) the counsel or his or her designee;
 - (3) the director of communications or his or her designee;
 - (4) the president of the Young Lawyers Division of the North Carolina Bar Association ("YLD") or his or her designee;
 - (5) the chairperson of the Client Assistance Committee; and
 - (6) other persons, such as the applicable local bar president(s), appointed by the president as necessary or appropriate for response in each individual situation.
- (b) Implementation of the disaster response plan shall be the decision of the president or, if he or she is unavailable, the president-elect, vice-president, or immediate past-president.
- (c) The counsel, or his or her designee, shall be the coordinator of the disaster response team ("coordinator"). If the president or other officer is unavailable to decide whether to implement the disaster response plan for a particular event, then and only then shall the coordinator be authorized to make the decision to implement the disaster response plan.
- (d) It shall be the responsibility of the coordinator to conduct periodic educational programs regarding the disaster response plan and to report regularly to the Client Assistance Committee.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.*

27 NCAC 01D .0302 GENERAL POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

- (a) Rapid Response
 - (1) It is essential that the State Bar establish an awareness and sensitivity to disaster situations.
 - (2) The disaster response plan will be disseminated through the publications of the State Bar and continuing legal education programs.
 - (3) The disaster response team shall be properly trained to respond to initial inquiries and appear at the site.
 - (4) The disaster response team will provide victims and/or their families with written materials when requested.
- (b) Effective Mobilization of Resources
 - (1) An appropriate press release shall be prepared and disseminated.
 - (2) The coordinator shall confirm the individuals who will make up the disaster response team.
 - (3) Individual assignments of responsibilities shall be made to members of the team by the coordinator.

- (4) The coordinator shall arrange for the State Bar to be represented at any victims' assistance center established at the disaster site. The coordinator will request the YLD to assist the State Bar by providing additional staffing.
 - (5) The coordinator shall contact the local district attorney(s) and request that he or she prosecute any persons engaging in the unauthorized practice of law (N.C.G.S. 84-2.1, 84-4, 84-7 and 84-8); improper solicitation (N.C.G.S. 84-38); division of fees (N.C.G.S. 84-38); and/or the common law crime of barratry (frequently stirring up suits and quarrels between persons).
- (c) Publicity
- (1) It is important to focus on the fact that disaster response is a public service effort.
 - (2) The disaster response team shall ensure approval and dissemination of an even-handed press release.
 - (3) The director of communications will be utilized for press contacts.
 - (4) It is important to ensure that the press release indicates that the State Bar is a resource designed to assist victims, if requested.
- (d) On-site Representation
- (1) It is normally desirable for the disaster response team to arrive at the site of the disaster as soon as possible.
 - (2) Only the president or president-elect or their designee will conduct press interviews on behalf of the State Bar.
 - (3) The availability of the State Bar at the site of the disaster should be made known to victims.
 - (4) The disaster response team shall establish a liaison with the State Emergency Management Division, Red Cross, Salvation Army, and other such organizations to provide assistance to victims and furnish written materials to these organizations.
 - (5) It is crucial that the State Bar not become identified with either side of any potential controversy.
 - (6) All members of the disaster response team must avoid making comments on the merits of claims that may arise from the disaster.
- (e) Dissemination of Information to Affected Individuals
- (1) The team shall emphasize in all public statements that the State Bar's major and only legitimate concern is for those persons affected by the disaster and the public interest.
 - (2) The State Bar's role is limited to monitoring compliance with its disciplinary rules, to requesting reports of any violation needing investigation, and to informing victims of rules concerning client solicitation.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .0303 REPORT ON RESULTS

- (a) The coordinator will promptly convene a meeting of groups involved in the disaster to review the effectiveness of the plan in that particular disaster.
- (b) The coordinator shall prepare a written report concerning significant matters relating to the disaster.
- (c) The written report shall be submitted to the Client Assistance Committee as well as other involved organizations.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.

SECTION .0400 - RULES AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL FOR INDIGENT DEFENDANTS IN CERTAIN CRIMINAL CASES

- 27 NCAC 01D .0401 AUTHORITY**
- 27 NCAC 01D .0402 DETERMINATION OF INDIGENCY**
- 27 NCAC 01D .0403 WAIVER OF COUNSEL**
- 27 NCAC 01D .0404 APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL**
- 27 NCAC 01D .0405 WITHDRAWAL BY COUNSEL**
- 27 NCAC 01D .0406 PROCEDURE FOR PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION**

History Note: Authority G.S. 7A-459;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;

Amended Eff. May 4, 2000;
Repealed Eff. October 6, 2004.

SECTION .0500 - MODEL PLAN FOR APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL FOR INDIGENT DEFENDANTS IN CERTAIN CRIMINAL CASES

27 NCAC 01D .0501	PURPOSE
27 NCAC 01D .0502	APPLICABILITY
27 NCAC 01D .0503	LISTS OF ATTORNEYS
27 NCAC 01D .0504	COMMITTEE ON INDIGENT APPOINTMENTS
27 NCAC 01D .0505	PLACEMENT OF ATTORNEYS ON LIST
27 NCAC 01D .0506	APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE (NONCAPITAL CASES)
27 NCAC 01D .0507	APPOINTMENTS IN CAPITAL CASES
27 NCAC 01D .0508	APPELLATE APPOINTMENTS
27 NCAC 01D .0509	ADMINISTRATION
27 NCAC 01D .0510	MISCELLANEOUS

History Note: Authority G.S. 7A-459;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Repealed Eff. October 6, 2004.

SECTION .0600 - RULES GOVERNING THE LAWYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

27 NCAC 01D .0601 PURPOSE

The purpose of the lawyer assistance program is to: (1) protect the public by assisting lawyers and judges who are professionally impaired by reason of substance abuse, addiction, or debilitating mental condition; (2) assist impaired lawyers and judges in recovery; and (3) educate lawyers and judges concerning the causes of and remedies for such impairment.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0602 AUTHORITY

The council of the North Carolina State Bar hereby establishes the Lawyer Assistance Program Board (the board) as a standing committee of the council. The board has the authority to establish policies governing the State Bar's lawyer assistance program as needed to implement the purposes of this program. The authority conveyed is not limited by, but is fully coextensive with, the authority previously vested in the State Bar's predecessor program, the Positive Action for Lawyers (PALS) program.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0603 OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The board shall be responsible for operating the lawyer assistance program subject to the statutes governing the practice of law, the authority of the council, and the rules of the board.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0604 SIZE OF BOARD

The board shall have nine members. Three of the members shall be councilors of the North Carolina State Bar at the time of appointment; three of the members shall be non-lawyers or lawyers with experience and training in the fields of mental health, substance abuse or addiction; and three of the members shall be lawyers who are currently volunteers to the lawyer assistance

program. In addition, the board may have the dean of a law school in North Carolina, or the dean's designee, appointed by the council as an ex officio member. No member of the Grievance Committee shall be a member of the board.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000;
Amended Eff. November 16, 2006.

27 NCAC 01D .0605 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS; WHEN; REMOVAL

The initial members of the board shall be appointed at the next meeting of the council following the creation of the board. Thereafter, members shall be appointed or reappointed, as the case may be, at the first quarterly meeting of the council each calendar year, provided that a vacancy occurring by reason of death, resignation, or removal shall be filled by appointment of the council at the next quarterly meeting following the event giving rise to the vacancy, and the person so appointed shall serve for the balance of the vacated term. Any member of the board may be removed at any time by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the council in session at a regularly called meeting.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0606 TERM OF OFFICE AND SUCCESSION

The members of the board shall be divided into three classes of equal size to serve in the first instance for terms expiring one, two and three years, respectively, after the first quarterly meeting of the council following creation of the board. Of the initial board, three members (one councilor, one mental health, substance abuse or addiction professional, and one lawyer-volunteer to the lawyer assistance program) shall be appointed to terms of one year; three members (one councilor, one mental health, substance abuse or addiction professional, and one lawyer-volunteer) shall be appointed to terms of two years; and three members (one councilor, one mental health, substance abuse or addiction professional, and one lawyer-volunteer) shall be appointed to terms of three years. Thereafter, the successors in each class of board members shall be appointed to serve for terms of three years. No member shall serve more than two consecutive three-year terms, in addition to service prior to the beginning of a full three-year term, without having been off the board for at least three years. Members of the board serving ex officio shall serve one-year terms and may serve up to three consecutive terms.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000;
Amended Eff. November 16, 2006.

27 NCAC 01D .0607 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

The chairperson of the board shall be appointed by the council annually at the time of its appointment of board members. The chairperson may be re-appointed for an unlimited number of one-year terms. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the board, shall prepare and present to the council the annual report of the board, and shall represent the board in its dealings with the public. A vacancy occurring by reason of death, resignation, or removal shall be filled by appointment of the council at the next quarterly meeting following the event giving rise to the vacancy, and the person so appointed shall serve for the balance of the vacated term.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0608 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The vice-chairperson of the board shall be appointed by the council annually at the time of its appointment of board members. The vice-chairperson may be re-appointed for an unlimited number of one-year terms. The vice-chairperson shall preside at and represent the board in the absence of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him or her by the chairperson or by the board. A vacancy occurring by reason of death, resignation, or removal shall be filled by appointment of the council at the next quarterly meeting following the event giving rise to the vacancy, and the person so appointed shall serve for the balance of the vacated term.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0609 SOURCE OF FUNDS

Funding for the program shall be provided from the general and appropriate special funds of the North Carolina State Bar and such other funds as may become available by grant or otherwise.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000.*

27 NCAC 01D .0610 MEETINGS

The annual meeting of the board shall be held in October of each year in connection with the annual meeting of the North Carolina State Bar. The board by resolution may set regular meeting dates and places. Special meetings of the board may be called at any time upon notice given by the chairperson, the vice-chairperson, or any two members of the board. Notice of meeting shall be given at least two days prior to the meeting by mail, telegram, facsimile transmission, electronic mail or telephone. A quorum of the board for conducting its official business shall be a majority of the members serving at a particular time.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000.*

27 NCAC 01D .0611 ANNUAL REPORT

The board shall prepare at least annually a report of its activities and shall present the same at the annual meeting of the council.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000.*

27 NCAC 01D .0612 POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD

In addition to the powers and duties set forth elsewhere in these rules, the board shall have the following powers and duties:

- (1) to exercise general supervisory authority over the administration of the lawyer assistance program consistent with these rules;
- (2) to implement programs to investigate and evaluate reports that a lawyer's ability to practice law is impaired because of substance abuse, depression, or other debilitating mental condition; to confer with any lawyer who is the subject of such a report; and, if the report is verified, to provide referrals and assistance to the impaired lawyer;
- (3) to adopt and amend regulations consistent with these rules with the approval of the council;
- (4) to delegate authority to the staff of the lawyer assistance program subject to the review of the council;
- (5) to delegate authority to investigate, evaluate, and intervene with impaired lawyers to committees composed of qualified volunteer lawyers and non-lawyers;
- (6) to submit an annual budget for the lawyer assistance program to the council for approval and to ensure that expenses of the board do not exceed the annual budget approved by the council;
- (7) to report annually on the activities and operations of the board to the council and make any recommendations for changes in the rules or methods of operation of the lawyer assistance program;
- (8) to implement programs to investigate, evaluate, and intervene in cases referred to it by a disciplinary body, and to report the results of the investigation and evaluation to the referring body;
- (9) to promote programs of education and awareness for lawyers, law students, and judges about the causes and remedies of lawyer impairment;
- (10) to train volunteer lawyers to provide peer support, assistance and monitoring for impaired lawyers; and
- (11) to administer the PALS revolving loan fund or other similar fund that may be established for the board's program to assist lawyers who are impaired because of a debilitating mental condition.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000.*

27 NCAC 01D .0613 CONFIDENTIALITY

The lawyer assistance program is an approved lawyers' assistance program in accordance with the requirements of Rule 1.6(c) of the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct. Except as noted herein and otherwise required by law, information received during the course of investigating, evaluating, and assisting an impaired lawyer shall be privileged and held in the strictest confidence by the staff of the lawyer assistance program, the members of the board, and the members of any committee of the board. If a report of impaired condition is made by members of a lawyer's family, and there is good cause shown, the board may, in its discretion, release information to appropriate members of the lawyer's family if the board or its duly authorized committee determines that such disclosure is in the best interest of the impaired lawyer.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0614 RESERVED

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23; 84-28;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000;
Repealed Eff. November 16, 2006.

27 NCAC 01D .0615 REGIONAL CHAPTERS

A committee may, under appropriate rules and regulations promulgated by the board, establish regional chapters, composed of qualified volunteer lawyers and non-lawyers. A regional chapter may perform any or all of the duties and functions set forth in Section .0600 of this Subchapter to the extent provided by the rules of the board.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0616 SUSPENSION FOR IMPAIRMENT, REINSTATEMENT

If it appears that a lawyer's ability to practice law is impaired by substance abuse and/or chemical addiction, the board, or its duly authorized committee, may petition any superior court judge to issue an order, pursuant to the court's inherent authority, suspending the lawyer's license to practice law in this state for up to 180 days.

- (a) The petition shall be supported by affidavits of at least two persons setting out the evidence of the lawyer's impairment.
- (b) The petition shall be signed by the executive director of the lawyer assistance program and the executive director of the State Bar.
- (c) The petition shall contain a request for a protective order sealing the petition and all proceedings respecting it.
- (d) Except as set out in 27 NCAC 01D .0606(j) of this Rule, the petition shall request the court to issue an order requiring the attorney to appear in not less than 10 days and show cause why the attorney should not be suspended from the practice of law. No order suspending an attorney's license shall be entered without notice and a hearing, except as provided in 27 NCAC 01D .0606(j) of this Rule.
- (e) The order to show cause shall be served upon the attorney, along with the State Bar's petition and supporting affidavits, as provided in Rule 4 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure.
- (f) At the show cause hearing, the State Bar shall have the burden of proving by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the lawyer's ability to practice law is impaired.
- (g) If the court finds that the attorney is impaired, the court may enter an order suspending the attorney from the practice of law for up to 180 days. The order shall specifically set forth the reasons for its issuance.
- (h) At any time following entry of an order suspending an attorney, the attorney may petition the court for an order reinstating the attorney to the practice of law.
- (i) A hearing on the reinstatement petition will be held no later than 10 days from the filing of the petition, unless the suspended lawyer agrees to a continuance. At the hearing, the suspended lawyer will have the burden of establishing by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence the following: (1) the lawyer's ability to practice law is no longer impaired; (2) the lawyer's debilitating condition is being treated and/or managed;

- (3) it is unlikely that the inability to practice law due to the impairment will recur; and (4) it is unlikely that the interest of the public will be unduly threatened by the reinstatement of the lawyer.
- (j) No suspension of an attorney's license shall be allowed without notice and a hearing unless:
- (1) the State Bar files a petition with supporting affidavits, as provided in 27 NCAC 01D .0606(a)-(c) of this Rule.
 - (2) the State Bar's petition and supporting affidavits demonstrate by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that immediate and irreparable harm, injury, loss, or damage will result to the public, to the lawyer who is the subject of the petition, or to the administration of justice before notice can be given and a hearing had on the petition.
 - (3) the State Bar's petition specifically seeks the temporary emergency relief of suspending *ex parte* the attorney's license for up to 10 days or until notice be given and a hearing held, whichever is shorter, and the State Bar's petition requests the court to endorse an emergency order entered hereunder with the hour and date of its entry.
 - (4) the State Bar's petition requests that the emergency suspension order expire by its own terms 10 days from the date of entry, unless, prior to the expiration of the initial 10-day period, the court agrees to extend the order for an additional 10-day period for good cause shown or the respondent attorney agrees to an extension of the suspension period.
- (k) The respondent attorney may apply to the court at any time for an order dissolving the emergency suspension order. The court may dissolve the emergency suspension order without notice to the State Bar or hearing, or may order a hearing on such notice as the court deems proper.
- (l) The North Carolina State Bar shall not be required to provide security for payment of costs or damages prior to entry of a suspension order with or without notice to the respondent attorney.
- (m) No damages shall be awarded against the State Bar in the event that a restraining order entered with or without notice and a hearing is dissolved.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28(i);
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000; September 7, 1995.

27 NCAC 01D .0617 CONSENSUAL INACTIVE STATUS

Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule .0616 of this subchapter, the court may enter an order transferring the lawyer to inactive status if the lawyer consents. The order may contain such other terms and provisions as the parties agree to and which are necessary for the protection of the public. A lawyer transferred to inactive status pursuant to this rule may not petition for reinstatement pursuant to Rule .0902 of this subchapter. The lawyer may apply to the court at any time for an order reinstating the lawyer to active status.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-28(i);
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 8, 2013; February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0618 AGENTS OF THE STATE BAR

All members of the board and its duly appointed committees shall be deemed to be acting as agents of the State Bar when performing the functions and duties set forth in this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0619 JUDICIAL COMMITTEE

The Judicial Committee of the Lawyer Assistance Program Board shall implement a program of intervention for members of the judiciary with substance abuse problems affecting their professional conduct. The committee shall consist of at least two members of the state's judiciary. The committee will be governed by the rules of the Lawyer Assistance Program Board where applicable. 27 NCAC 01D .0616 and .0617 of this Subchapter are not applicable to the committee.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;

Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0620 REHABILITATION CONTRACTS FOR LAWYERS IMPAIRED BY SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The board, or its duly authorized committee, has the authority to enter into rehabilitation contracts with lawyers suffering from substance abuse including contracts that provide for alcohol and/or drug testing. Such contracts may include the following conditions among others:

- (a) that upon receipt of a report of a positive alcohol or drug test for a substance prohibited under the contract, the contract may be amended to include additional provisions considered to be in the best rehabilitative interest of the lawyer and the public; and
- (b) that the lawyer stipulates to the admission of any alcohol and/or drug-testing results into evidence in any *in camera* proceeding brought under this Section without the necessity of further authentication.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 7, 1996;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0621 EVALUATIONS FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE, ALCOHOLISM, AND/OR OTHER CHEMICAL ADDICTIONS

(a) Notice of Need for Evaluation. The Lawyer Assistance Program Board, or its duly authorized committee, may demand that a lawyer obtain a comprehensive evaluation of his or her condition by an approved addiction specialist if the lawyer's ability to practice law is apparently being impaired by substance abuse, alcoholism and/or other chemical addictions. This authority may be exercised upon recommendation of the director of the lawyer assistance program and the approval of at least three members of the board or appropriate committee, which shall include at least one person with professional expertise in chemical addiction. Written notice shall be provided to the lawyer informing the lawyer that the board has determined that an evaluation is necessary and demanding that the lawyer obtain the evaluation by a date set forth in the written notice.

(b) Failure to Comply. If the lawyer does not obtain an evaluation, the director of the lawyer assistance program shall obtain the approval of the chairperson of the board, or the chairperson of the appropriate committee of the board, to file a motion to compel an evaluation pursuant to the authority set forth in G.S. 84-28(i) and (j) and in accordance with the procedure set forth in Rule 35 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure. All pleadings in such a proceeding shall be filed under seal and all hearings shall be held *in camera*. Written notice of the motion to compel an examination shall be served upon the lawyer in accordance with the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure at least ten days before the hearing on the matter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0622 GROUNDS FOR COMPELLING AN EVALUATION

An order compelling the lawyer to obtain a comprehensive evaluation by an addiction specialist may be issued if the board establishes that the evaluation will assist the lawyer and the lawyer assistance program to assess the lawyer's condition and any risk that the condition may present to the public, and to determine an appropriate treatment for the lawyer.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0623 FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH AN ORDER COMPELLING AN EVALUATION

If a lawyer fails to comply with an order compelling a comprehensive evaluation by an addiction specialist, the board, or its duly authorized committee, may file a contempt proceeding to be held *in camera*. If the lawyer fails to comply with a contempt order, the lawyer shall be deemed to have waived confidentiality respecting communications made by the lawyer to the board or its committee. The board, or its duly authorized committee, may seek further relief and may file motions or proceedings in open court.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-22; 84-23;
Adopted Eff. February 3, 2000.

SECTION .0700 - PROCEDURES FOR FEE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

27 NCAC 01D .0701 PURPOSE AND IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of the Fee Dispute Resolution Program is to help clients and lawyers settle disputes over fees. The Fee Dispute Resolution Program will attempt to assist lawyers and clients in resolving disputes concerning legal fees and expenses. The State Bar will implement the Fee Dispute Resolution Program under the auspices of the Grievance Committee (the committee) as part of the Attorney Client Assistance Program (ACAP). It will be offered to clients and lawyers at no cost.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 3, 2000; May 4, 2000; March 8, 2007; March 11, 2010; September 25, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .0702 JURISDICTION

(a) The committee has jurisdiction over a disagreement arising out of a client-lawyer relationship concerning the fees and expenses charged or incurred for legal services provided by a lawyer licensed to practice law in North Carolina.

(b) The committee does not have jurisdiction over the following:

- (1) a dispute concerning fees or expenses established by a court, federal or state administrative agency, federal or state official, or private arbitrator or arbitrator panel;
- (2) a dispute over fees or expenses that are or were the subject of litigation or arbitration unless
 - (i) a court, arbitrator, or arbitration panel directs the matter to the State Bar for resolution,
 - (ii) both parties to the dispute agree to dismiss the litigation or arbitration without prejudice and pursue resolution through the State Bar's Fee Dispute Resolution program; or
 - (iii) litigation was commenced pursuant to 27 N.C. Admin. Code 1D §.0707(a);
- (3) a dispute between a lawyer and a service provider, such as a court reporter or an expert witness;
- (4) a dispute over fees or expenses that are the subject of a pending Client Security Fund claim, or a Client Security Fund claim that has been fully paid.
- (5) a dispute between a lawyer and a person or entity with whom the lawyer had no client-lawyer relationship; and
- (6) a dispute concerning a fee charged for services provided by the lawyer that do not constitute the practice of law.

(c) The committee will encourage settlement of fee disputes falling within its jurisdiction.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: May 4, 2000; March 11, 2010; August 23, 2012; September 25, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .0703 COORDINATOR OF FEE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina State Bar will designate a member of the staff to serve as coordinator of the Fee Dispute Resolution Program. The coordinator will develop forms, maintain records, and provide statistics on the Fee Dispute Resolution Program. The coordinator will also develop an annual report to the council. The coordinator may also serve as a facilitator.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 11, 2010; March 8, 2007; May 4, 2000.

27 NCAC 01D .0704 CONFIDENTIALITY

The Fee Dispute Resolution Program is a subcommittee of the Grievance Committee, which maintains all information in the possession of the Fee Dispute Resolution Program. Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 84-32.1, documents in the possession of the Fee Dispute Resolution Program are confidential and are not public records.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 11, 2010;

Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 25, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .0705 SELECTION OF FACILITATORS

The secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina State Bar will designate members of the State Bar staff to serve as facilitators.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. May 4, 2000;
Amended Eff. March 11, 2010.*

27 NCAC 01D .0706 POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The vice-chairperson of the Grievance Subcommittee overseeing ACAP, or his or her designee, will:

- (a) approve or disapprove a respondent's request to withhold the respondent's response from the petitioner; and
- (b) refer to the Grievance Committee all cases in which it appears that
 - (i) a lawyer might have demanded, charged, contracted to receive, or received an illegal or clearly excessive fee or a clearly excessive amount for expenses in violation of Rule 1.5 of the Rules of Professional Conduct; or
 - (ii) a lawyer might have failed to refund an unearned portion of a fee in violation of Rule 1.5 the Rules of Professional Conduct, or
 - (iii) a lawyer might have violated any other provision of the Rules of Professional Conduct

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. May 4, 2000;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 5, 2002; March 8, 2007; March 11, 2010; September 25, 2019; May 21, 2025.*

27 NCAC 01D .0707 PROCESSING REQUESTS FOR FEE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

(a) A request for resolution of a disputed fee must be submitted in writing to the coordinator of the Fee Dispute Resolution Program addressed to the North Carolina State Bar, PO Box 25908, Raleigh, NC 27611. A lawyer is required by Rule of Professional Conduct 1.5 to notify in writing a client with whom the lawyer has a dispute over a fee (i) of the existence of the Fee Dispute Resolution Program and (ii) that if the client does not file a petition for fee dispute resolution within 30 days after the client receives such notification, the lawyer will be permitted by Rule of Professional Conduct 1.5 to file a lawsuit to collect the disputed fee. A lawyer may file a lawsuit prior to expiration of the required 30-day notice period or after the petition is filed by the client only if such filing is necessary to preserve a claim. If a lawyer does file a lawsuit pursuant to the preceding sentence, the lawyer must not take steps to pursue the litigation until the fee dispute resolution process is completed. A client may request fee dispute resolution at any time before either party files a lawsuit. The petition for resolution of a disputed fee must contain:

- (1) the names and addresses of the parties to the dispute;
- (2) a clear and brief statement of the facts giving rise to the dispute;
- (3) a statement that, prior to requesting fee dispute resolution, a reasonable attempt was made to resolve the dispute by agreement;
- (4) a statement that the subject matter of the dispute has not been adjudicated and is not presently the subject of litigation.

(b) A petition for resolution of a disputed fee must be filed (i) before the expiration of the statute of limitation applicable in the General Court of Justice for collection of the funds in issue or (ii) within three years of the termination of the client-lawyer relationship, whichever is later.

(c) The State Bar will process fee disputes and grievances in the following order:

- (1) If a client submits to the State Bar simultaneously a grievance and a request for resolution of disputed fee involving the same attorney-client relationship, the request for resolution of disputed fee will be processed first and the grievance will not be processed until the fee dispute resolution process is concluded.
- (2) If a client submits a grievance to the State Bar and the State Bar determines it would be appropriate for the Fee Dispute Resolution Program to attempt to assist the client and the lawyer in settling a dispute over a legal fee, the attempt to resolve the fee dispute will occur first. If a grievance file has been opened, it will be stayed until the Fee Dispute Resolution Program has concluded its attempt to facilitate resolution of the disputed fee.

- (3) If a client submits a request for resolution of a disputed fee to the State Bar while a grievance submitted by the same client and relating to the same attorney-client relationship is pending, the grievance will be stayed while the Fee Dispute Resolution Program attempts to facilitate resolution of the disputed fee.
 - (4) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (c)(1), (2), and (3) of this section, the State Bar will process a grievance before it processes a fee dispute or at the same time it processes a fee dispute only when the State Bar determines that doing so is in the public interest.
- (d) The coordinator of the Fee Dispute Resolution Program or a facilitator will review the petition to determine its suitability for fee dispute resolution. If it is determined that the dispute is not suitable for fee dispute resolution, the parties will be notified in writing that the dispute is not suitable for fee dispute resolution and that a file will not be opened or, if a file has already been opened, that the file has been closed. Grounds for concluding that a petition is not suitable for fee dispute resolution or for closing a file include, but are not limited to :
- (1) the petition is frivolous or moot;
 - (2) the committee lacks jurisdiction over one or more of the parties or over the subject matter of the dispute; or
 - (3) due to complexity of the dispute, the amount of fees or expenses at issue, lack of cooperation by one or more of the parties, or other factors, facilitating resolution of the dispute will consume a disproportionately large amount of the fee dispute program's resources.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. May 4, 2000;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 8, 2007; March 11, 2010; September 25, 2019; May 21, 2025.*

27 NCAC 01D .0708 SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE PROCEDURE

- (a) The coordinator will assign the case to a facilitator.
- (b) The State Bar will serve a letter of notice upon the respondent lawyer.
 - (1) The letter of notice shall be served by one of the following methods:
 - (A) mailing a copy thereof by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the member contained in the records of the North Carolina State Bar ;
 - (B) mailing a copy thereof by designated delivery service (such as Federal Express or UPS), return receipt requested, to the last known address of the member contained in the records of the North Carolina State Bar ;
 - (C) personal service by the State Bar counsel or deputy counsel or by a State Bar investigator;
 - (D) personal service by any person authorized by Rule 4 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure to serve process; or
 - (E) email sent to the email address of the member contained in the records of the North Carolina State Bar if the member sends an email from that same email address to the State Bar agreeing to accept service of the letter of notice by email. Service of the letter of notice will be deemed complete on the date that the letter of notice is sent by email.

A member who cannot, with reasonable diligence, be served by one of the methods identified in subparagraphs (A)–(E) above shall be deemed served upon publication of the notice in the State Bar Journal.
 - (2) The letter of notice shall enclose copies of the petition and of any relevant materials provided by the petitioner.
 - (3) The letter of notice shall notify the respondent (i) that the petition was filed and (ii) of the respondent's obligation to provide to the State Bar a written response to the letter of notice, signed by the respondent, within 15 days of service of the letter of notice.
- (c) Within 15 days after the letter of notice is served upon the respondent, the respondent must provide a written response to the petition which must be signed by the respondent. The facilitator may grant requests for extensions of time to respond. The response must be a full and fair disclosure of all the facts and circumstances pertaining to the dispute. The response shall include all documents necessary to a full and fair understanding of the dispute and shall not include documents that are not necessary to a full and fair understanding of the dispute. The facilitator will provide a copy of the response to the petitioner unless the vice-chair or the vice-chair's designee determines that good cause exists to approve a respondent's request not to provide the response to the petitioner. The determination of the vice-chair or of the vice-chair's designee whether good cause exists is final and is not subject to review.

- (d) The facilitator may conduct any investigation the facilitator determines to be necessary to understand the facts relevant to the dispute.
- (e) The facilitator shall determine, in the facilitator's sole discretion, whether the settlement conference will be held via email or telephone communications, with both parties simultaneously, or with one party at a time.
- (f) The facilitator will explain the following to the parties:
- (1) the procedure that will be followed;
 - (2) the differences between a facilitated settlement conference and other forms of conflict resolution;
 - (3) that the settlement conference is not a trial;
 - (4) that the facilitator is not a judge;
 - (5) that participation in the settlement conference does not deprive the parties of any right they would otherwise have to pursue resolution of the dispute through the court system if they do not reach a settlement;
 - (6) the circumstances under which the facilitator may communicate privately with any party or with any other person;
 - (7) whether and under what conditions private communications with the facilitator will be shared with the other party or held in confidence during the conference; and
 - (8) that any agreement reached will be reached by mutual consent of the parties.
- (g) It is the duty of the facilitator to be impartial and to advise the parties of any circumstance that might cause either party to conclude that the facilitator has a possible bias, prejudice, or partiality.
- (h) It is the duty of the facilitator to timely determine when the dispute cannot be resolved by settlement and to declare that an impasse exists and that the settlement conference will end.
- (i) Upon completion of the settlement conference, the facilitator will prepare a disposition letter to be sent to the parties explaining:
- (1) that the settlement conference resulted in a settlement and the terms of settlement; or
 - (2) that the settlement conference resulted in an impasse.

History Note Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. May 4, 2000;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 11, 2010; September 25, 2019; March 20, 2024;
May 21, 2025.

27 NCAC 01D .0709 RECORD KEEPING

The coordinator of fee dispute resolution will keep a record of each request for fee dispute resolution. The record must contain the following information:

- (1) the petitioner's name;
- (2) the date the petition was received;
- (3) the respondent's name;
- (4) the district in which the respondent resides or maintains a place of business;
- (5) what action was taken on the petition and, if applicable, how the dispute was resolved; and
- (6) the date the file was closed.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. May 4, 2000;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 11, 2010; September 25, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .0710 DISTRICT BAR FEE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. May 4, 2000;
Amended Eff. March 11, 2010;
Repealed Eff. September 25, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .0711 DISTRICT BAR SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

*Adopted Eff. March 11, 2010;
Repealed Eff. September 25, 2019.*

SECTION .0800 - RESERVED

SECTION .0900 – PROCEDURES FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

27 NCAC 01D .0901 TRANSFER TO INACTIVE STATUS

(a) Petition for Transfer from Active to Inactive Status

Any active member who desires to be transferred to inactive status shall file a petition with the secretary addressed to the council setting forth fully:

- (1) the member's name and current address;
- (2) the date of the member's admission to the North Carolina State Bar;
- (3) that at the time of filing the petition the member is in good standing having paid all membership fees, Client Security Fund assessments, late fees and costs assessed by the North Carolina State Bar, as well as all past due fees, fines and penalties owed to the Board of Continuing Legal Education.
- (4) any other matters pertinent to the petition.

(b) Petition for Transfer from Administrative Suspension Status to Inactive Status

Any member suspended pursuant to Rule .0903 of this subchapter who desires to be reinstated and immediately transferred to inactive status shall file a petition with the secretary addressed to the council setting forth fully:

- (1) the member's name and current address;
- (2) the date of the member's admission to the North Carolina State Bar;
- (3) the date of the member's administrative suspension;
- (4) that at the time of filing the petition the member has paid all membership fees, Client Security Fund assessments, late fees and costs assessed by the North Carolina State Bar, as well as all past due fees, fines and penalties owed to the Board of Continuing Legal Education;
- (5) that the member acknowledges that any subsequent petition to transfer from inactive status to active status will require satisfying the requirements for reinstatement from suspension pursuant to Rule .904 of this subchapter, using the effective date of the member's suspension to calculate the requirements of Rule .0904(d)(3) or (4).

(c) Conditions Upon Transfer

No member may be voluntarily transferred to disability-inactive status, retired/nonpracticing status, or emeritus pro bono status until:

- (1) the member has paid all membership fees, Client Security Fund assessments, late fees, and costs assessed by the North Carolina State Bar or the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, as well as all past due fees, fines and penalties owed to the Board of Continuing Legal Education;
- (2) the member acknowledges that the member continues to be subject to the Rules of Professional Conduct and to the disciplinary jurisdiction of the State Bar including jurisdiction in any pending matter before the Grievance Committee or the Disciplinary Hearing Commission; and,
- (3) in the case of a member seeking emeritus pro bono status, it is determined by the Administrative Committee that the member is in good standing, is not the subject of any matter pending before the Grievance Committee or the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, and will be supervised by an active member employed by a nonprofit corporation qualified to render legal services pursuant to G.S. 84-5.1.

(d) Order Transferring Member to Inactive Status

Upon receipt of a petition which satisfies the provisions of Rule .0901(a) or (b) above, the council may, in its discretion, enter an order transferring the member to inactive status and, where appropriate for petitions filed pursuant to Rule .0901(a), granting emeritus pro bono status. The order shall become effective immediately upon entry by the council. A copy of the order shall be mailed to the member.

(e) Transfer to Inactive Status by Secretary of the State Bar

Notwithstanding paragraph (d) of this rule, an active member may petition for transfer to inactive status pursuant to paragraph (a) or (b) of this rule and may be transferred to inactive status by the secretary of the State Bar upon a finding that the active member has complied with or fulfilled the conditions for transfer to inactive status set forth in paragraph (c) of this rule. Transfer to inactive status by the secretary is discretionary. If the secretary declines to transfer a member to inactive status, the member's petition shall be submitted to the Administrative Committee at its next meeting and the procedure for review of the petition shall be as set forth in paragraph (d) of this rule.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 7, 1996; February 3, 2000; March 6, 2008; March 6, 2014;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court November 2, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024;
Amended Eff. September 1, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .0902 REINSTATEMENT FROM INACTIVE STATUS

(a) Eligibility to Apply for Reinstatement

Any member who has been transferred to inactive status may petition the council for an order reinstating the member as an active member of the North Carolina State Bar.

(b) Definition of "Year"

As used in this rule, a year is a 365 day period of time unless a calendar year is specified.

(c) Requirements for Reinstatement

(1) Completion of Petition.

The member must provide the information requested on a petition form prescribed by the council and must sign the petition under oath.

(2) CLE Requirements Before Inactive.

Unless the member was exempt from such requirements pursuant to Rule .1517 of this subchapter or is subject to the requirements in paragraph (c)(5) of this rule, the member must satisfy the minimum continuing legal education requirements, as set forth in Rule .1518 of this subchapter, for the calendar year in which the member was transferred to inactive status (the "subject year") if such transfer occurred on or after July 1 of the subject year, including any deficit from a prior calendar year that was carried forward and recorded in the member's CLE record for the subject year.

(3) Character and Fitness to Practice.

The member must have the moral qualifications, competency and learning in the law required for admission to practice law in the state of North Carolina, and must show that the member's resumption of the practice of law within this state will be neither detrimental to the integrity and standing of the Bar or the administration of justice nor subversive of the public interest.

(4) Additional CLE Requirements.

If more than one year has elapsed between the date of the entry of the order transferring the member to inactive status and the date that the petition is filed, the member must complete 12 hours of approved CLE for each year that the member was inactive up to a maximum of 7 years. The CLE hours must be completed within two years prior to filing the petition. For each 12-hour increment, 2 hours must be earned by attending courses in the areas of professional responsibility and/or professionalism. If during the period of inactivity the member complied with mandatory CLE requirements of another state where the member is licensed, those CLE credit hours may be applied to the requirements under this provision without regard to whether they were taken during the two years prior to filing the petition.

(5) Bar Exam and MPRE Requirement If Inactive Seven or More Years.

(A) If seven years or more have elapsed between the date of the entry of the order transferring the member to inactive status and the date that the petition is filed, the member must satisfy the following requirements in lieu of the CLE requirements in paragraphs (c)(2) and (c)(4):

- (1) attainment of a passing score, within nine months following an order conditionally granting the petition, on a regularly-scheduled Uniform Bar Examination prepared by the National Conference of Bar Examiners;
- (2) successful completion, within nine months following an order conditionally granting the petition, of the State-Specific Component prescribed by the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners; and
- (3) attainment of a passing score, within nine months following an order conditionally granting the petition, on a regularly-scheduled Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners.

(B) A member may offset the inactive status period for the purpose of calculating the seven years necessary to actuate the requirements of paragraph (A) as follows:

- (1) Active Licensure in Another State. Each year of active licensure in another state during the period of inactive status shall offset one year of inactive status for the purpose of calculating the seven years necessary to actuate the requirements of paragraph (A). If the member is not required to satisfy the requirements of paragraph (A) as a consequence of offsetting, the member shall satisfy the CLE requirements set forth in paragraph (c)(4) for each year that the member was inactive up to a maximum of seven years.
 - (2) Military Service. Each calendar year in which an inactive member served on full-time, active military duty, whether for the entire calendar year or some portion thereof, shall offset one year of inactive status for the purpose of calculating the seven years necessary to actuate the requirements of paragraph (A). If the member is not required to satisfy the requirements of paragraph (A) as a consequence of offsetting, the member shall satisfy the CLE requirements set forth in paragraph (c)(4) for each year that the member was inactive up to a maximum of seven years.
 - (3) Federal Court Judicial Service. Each calendar year in which an inactive member served in the federal judiciary, whether for the entire calendar year or some portion thereof, shall offset one year of inactive status for the purpose of calculating the seven years necessary to actuate the requirements of paragraph (A). Such service shall also satisfy the CLE requirements set forth in paragraph (c)(4) for each year, or portion thereof, that the member served as a federal judge.
- (6) Payment of Fees, Assessments and Costs.
The member must pay all of the following:
- (A) a reinstatement fee in an amount to be determined by the council;
 - (B) the membership fee and the Client Security Fund assessment for the year in which the application is filed;
 - (C) the annual membership fee, if any, of the member's district bar for the year in which the application is filed and any past due annual membership fees for any district bar with which the member was affiliated prior to transferring to inactive status;
 - (D) all attendee fees owed the Board of Continuing Legal Education for CLE courses taken to satisfy the requirements of paragraphs (c)(2), (4), and (5);
 - (E) any costs previously assessed against the member by the chairperson of the Grievance Committee, the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, and/or the secretary or council of the North Carolina State Bar; and
 - (F) all costs incurred by the North Carolina State Bar in investigating and processing the application for reinstatement.

(d) Service of Reinstatement Petition

The petitioner shall serve the petition on the secretary. The secretary shall transmit a copy of the petition to the members of the Administrative Committee and to the counsel.

(e) Investigation by Counsel

The counsel may conduct any necessary investigation regarding the petition and shall advise the members of the Administrative Committee of any findings from such investigation.

(f) Recommendation of Administrative Committee

After any investigation of the petition by the counsel is complete, the Administrative Committee will consider the petition at its next meeting and shall make a recommendation to the council regarding whether the petition should be granted. The chair of the Administrative Committee may appoint a panel composed of at least three members of the committee to consider any petition for reinstatement and, on behalf of the Administrative Committee, to make a recommendation to the council regarding whether the petition should be granted.

- (1) Conditions Precedent to Reinstatement. Upon a determination that the petitioner has failed to demonstrate competence to return to the practice of law, the committee may require the petitioner to complete a specified number of hours of continuing legal education, which shall be in addition to the requirements set forth in Rule .0902(c)(2) and (4) above, as a condition precedent to the committee's recommendation that the petition be granted,
- (2) Conditions Subsequent to Reinstatement. Upon a determination that the petitioner is fit to return to the practice of law pursuant to the reasonable management of his or her substance abuse, addiction, or debilitating mental condition, the committee may recommend to the council that the reinstatement petition be granted with reasonable conditions to which the petitioner consents. Such conditions may include, but

are not limited to, an evaluation by a mental health professional approved by the Lawyer Assistance Program (LAP), compliance with the treatment recommendations of the mental health professional, periodic submission of progress reports by the mental health professional to LAP, and waiver of confidentiality relative to diagnosis and treatment by the mental health professional.

- (3) Failure of Conditions Subsequent to Reinstatement. In the event the petitioner fails to satisfy the conditions of the reinstatement order, the committee shall issue a notice directing the petitioner to show cause, in writing, why the petitioner should not be suspended from the practice of law. Notice shall be served and the right to request a hearing shall be as provided in Rule .0902(g) below. The hearing shall be conducted as provided in Section .1000 of this subchapter provided, however, the burden of proof shall be upon the petitioner to show by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that he or she has satisfied the conditions of the reinstatement order.

(g) Hearing Upon Denial of Petition for Reinstatement

- (1) Notice of Council Action and Request for Hearing

If the council denies a petition for reinstatement, the petitioner shall be notified in writing within 14 days after such action. The notice shall be served upon the petitioner pursuant to Rule 4 of the N.C. Rules of Civil Procedure and may be served by a State Bar investigator or any other person authorized by Rule 4 of the N.C. Rules of Civil Procedure to serve process.

- (2) The petitioner shall have 30 days from the date of service of the notice to file a written request for hearing upon the secretary. The request shall be served upon the secretary pursuant to Rule 4 of the N.C. Rules of Civil Procedure.

- (3) Hearing Procedure

The procedure for the hearing shall be as provided in Section .1000 of this subchapter.

(h) Reinstatement by Secretary of the State Bar

Notwithstanding paragraph (f) of this rule, an inactive member may petition for reinstatement pursuant to paragraphs (a) and (b) of this rule and may be reinstated by the secretary of the State Bar upon a finding that the inactive member has complied with or fulfilled the conditions for reinstatement set forth in this rule; there are no issues relating to the inactive member's character or fitness; and the inactive member has paid all fees owed to the State Bar including the reinstatement fee. Reinstatement by the secretary is discretionary. If the secretary declines to reinstate a member, the member's petition shall be submitted to the Administrative Committee at its next meeting and the procedure for review of the reinstatement petition shall be as set forth in paragraph (f) of this rule.

(i) Denial of Petition

When a petition for reinstatement is denied by the council in a given calendar year, the member may not petition again until the following calendar year. The reinstatement fee, costs, and any fees paid pursuant to paragraph (c)(6) shall be retained. However, the State Bar membership fee, Client Security Fund assessment, and district bar membership fee assessed for the year in which the application is filed shall be refunded.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;

Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 7, 1995; March 7, 1996; March 5, 1998; March 3, 1999; February 3, 2000; March 6, 2002; February 27, 2003; March 3, 2005; March 10, 2011; August 25, 2011; March 8, 2012; March 8, 2013; March 6, 2014; October 2, 2014; September 22, 2016; September 20, 2018; September 25, 2020; December 14, 2021;

Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court March 1, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .0903 SUSPENSION FOR FAILURE TO FULFILL OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

(a) Procedure for Enforcement of Obligations of Membership. Whenever a member of the North Carolina State Bar fails to fulfill an obligation of membership in the State Bar, whether established by the administrative rules of the State Bar or by statute, the member shall be subject to administrative suspension from membership pursuant to the procedure set forth in this rule; provided, however, that the procedures for the investigation of and action upon alleged violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct by a member are set forth in subchapter 01B of these rules and that no aspect of any procedure set forth in this rule shall be applicable to the State Bar's investigation of or action upon alleged violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct by a member.

- (1) The following are examples of obligations of membership that will be enforced by administrative suspension. This list is illustrative and not exclusive:

- (A) Payment of the annual membership fee, including any associated late fee as set forth in G.S. 84-34;
- (B) Payment of the annual Client Security Fund assessment;
- (C) Payment of the costs of a disciplinary, disability, reinstatement, show cause, or other proceeding of the State Bar as ordered by the chair of the Grievance Committee, the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, the secretary, or the council;
- (D) Filing of a pro hac vice registration statement as required in Rule .0101 of subchapter 01H of these rules; and
- (E) Filing of an annual report form and attending continuing legal education activities as required by Sections .1500 and .1600 of subchapter 01D of these rules.

(b) Notice. Whenever it appears that a member has failed to comply, in a timely fashion, with an obligation of membership in the State Bar as established by the administrative rules of the State Bar or by statute, the secretary shall prepare a written notice directing the member to show cause, in writing, within 30 days of the date of service of the notice why he or she should not be suspended from the practice of law.

(c) Service of the Notice. The notice shall be served on the member by mailing a copy thereof by registered or certified mail or designated delivery service (such as Federal Express or UPS), return receipt requested, to the last known address of the member contained in the records of the North Carolina State Bar or such later address as may be known to the person attempting service. Service of the notice may also be accomplished by (i) personal service by a State Bar investigator or by any person authorized by Rule 4 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure to serve process, or (ii) email sent to the email address of the member contained in the records of the North Carolina State Bar if the member sends an email from that same email address to the State Bar acknowledging such service.

(d) Entry of Order of Suspension upon Failure to Respond to Notice to Show Cause. Whenever a member fails to show cause in writing within 30 days of the service of the notice to show cause upon the member, and it appears that the member has failed to comply with an obligation of membership in the State Bar as established by the administrative rules of the State Bar or by statute, the council may enter an order suspending the member from the practice of law. The order shall be effective 30 days after proof of service on the member. The order shall be served on the member by mailing a copy thereof by registered or certified mail or designated delivery service, return receipt requested, to the last-known address of the member contained in the records of the North Carolina State Bar or such later address as may be known to the person attempting service. Service of the order may also be accomplished by (i) personal service by a State Bar investigator or by any person authorized by Rule 4 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure to serve process, or (ii) email sent to the email address of the member contained in the records of the North Carolina State Bar if the member sends an email from that same email address to the State Bar acknowledging such service. A member who cannot, with due diligence, be served by registered or certified mail, designated delivery service, personal service, or email shall be deemed served by the mailing of a copy of the order to the member's last known address contained in the records of the North Carolina State Bar.

(e) Procedure upon Submission of a Timely Response to a Notice to Show Cause

- (1) Consideration by Administrative Committee. If a member submits a written response to a notice to show cause within 30 days of the service of the notice upon the member, the Administrative Committee shall consider the matter at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The member may personally appear at the meeting and be heard, may be represented by counsel, and may offer witnesses and documents. The counsel may appear at the meeting on behalf of the State Bar and be heard, and may offer witnesses and documents. The burden of proof shall be upon the member to show cause by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence why the member should not be suspended from the practice of law for the apparent failure to fulfill an obligation of membership in the State Bar as established by the administrative rules of the State Bar or by statute.
- (2) Recommendation of Administrative Committee. The Administrative Committee shall determine whether the member has shown cause why the member should not be suspended. If the committee determines that the member has failed to show cause, the committee shall recommend to the council that the member be suspended.
- (3) Order of Suspension. Upon the recommendation of the Administrative Committee, the council may enter an order suspending the member from the practice of law. The order shall be effective 30 days after proof of service on the member. The order shall be served on the member by mailing a copy thereof by registered or certified mail return receipt requested to the last-known address of the member according to the records of the North Carolina State Bar or such later address as may be known to the person effecting the service. Notice may also be by personal service by a State Bar investigator or any other person authorized by Rule 4 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure to serve process. Unless the member complies with or

fulfills the obligation of membership within 30 days after service of the order, the obligations of a disbarred or suspended member to wind down the member's law practice within 30 days set forth in Rule .0128 of Subchapter 01B of these rules shall apply to the member upon the effective date of the order of suspension. If the member fails to fulfill the obligations set forth in Rule .0128 of Subchapter 01B within 30 days of the effective date of the order, the member shall be subject to professional discipline.

(f) Late Compliance. If a member fulfills the obligation of membership before a suspension order is entered by the council, no order of suspension will be entered.

(g) Administrative Suspension Pursuant to Statute. The provisions of this rule notwithstanding, if any section of the North Carolina General Statutes requires suspension of an occupational license, the procedure for suspension pursuant to such statute shall be as established by the statute. If no procedure is established by said statute, then the procedures specified in this rule shall be followed.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016; March 6, 2014; August 23, 2012;
March 11, 2010; October 8, 2009; March 6, 2008; November 16, 2006; March 2, 2006; October 1, 2003;
February 3, 2000; March 5, 1998; March 7, 1996; December 7, 1995; September 7, 1995.*

27 NCAC 01D .0904 REINSTATEMENT FROM SUSPENSION

(a) Compliance Within 30 Days of Service of Suspension Order.

A member who receives an order of suspension for failure to comply with an obligation of membership may preclude the order from becoming effective and shall not be required to file a formal reinstatement petition or pay the reinstatement fee if the member shows within 30 days after service of the suspension order that the member has done the following:

- (1) fulfilled the obligations of membership set forth in the order;
- (2) paid the administrative fees associated with the issuance of the suspension order, including the costs of service;
- (3) paid any other delinquency shown on the financial records of the State Bar including outstanding judicial district bar dues;
- (4) signed and filed CLE annual report forms as required by Rule .1522 of this subchapter;
- (5) completed CLE hours as required by Rules .1518 and .1522 of this subchapter; and
- (6) filed any IOLTA certification required by Rule .1319 of this subchapter.

(b) Reinstatement More than 30 Days after Service of Suspension Order.

At any time more than 30 days after service of an order of suspension on a member, a member who has been suspended for failure to comply with an obligation of membership may petition the council for an order of reinstatement.

(c) Definition of "Year."

As used in this rule, a year is a 365 day period of time unless a calendar year is specified.

(d) Requirements for Reinstatement

- (1) Completion of Petition
The member must provide the information requested on a petition form prescribed by the council and must sign the petition under oath.
- (2) CLE Requirements Before Suspended
Unless the member was exempt from such requirements pursuant to Rule .1517 of this subchapter or is subject to the requirements in paragraph (d)(4) of this rule, the member must satisfy the minimum continuing legal education (CLE) requirements, as set forth in Rule .1518 of this subchapter, for the calendar year in which the member was suspended (the "subject year") if such transfer occurred on or after July 1 of the subject year, including any deficit from a prior year that was carried forward and recorded in the member's CLE record for the subject year. The member shall also sign and file any delinquent CLE annual report form.
- (3) Additional CLE Requirements
If more than one year has elapsed between the effective date of the suspension order and the date upon which the reinstatement petition is filed, the member must complete 12 hours of approved CLE for each year that the member was suspended up to a maximum of seven years. The CLE must be completed within two years prior to filing the petition. For each 12-hour increment, 2 hours must be earned by attending courses in the areas of professional responsibility and/or professionalism. If during the period of suspension the member complied with mandatory CLE requirements of another state where the member is licensed,

those CLE credit hours may be applied to the requirements under this provision without regard to whether they were taken during the two years prior to filing the petition.

- (4) Bar Exam and MPRE Requirement If Suspended Seven or More Years
- (A) If seven years or more have elapsed between the effective date of the suspension order and the date that the petition is filed, the member satisfy the following requirements in lieu of the CLE requirements in paragraphs (d)(2) and (d)(3):
- (1) attainment of a passing score, within nine months following an order conditionally granting the petition, on a regularly-scheduled Uniform Bar Examination prepared by the National Conference of Bar Examiners;
 - (2) successful completion, within nine months following an order conditionally granting the petition, of the State-Specific Component prescribed by the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners; and
 - (3) attainment of a passing score, within nine months following an order conditionally granting the petition, on a regularly-scheduled Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners.
- (B) A member may offset the suspended status period for the purpose of calculating the seven years necessary to actuate the requirements of paragraph (A) as follows:
- (1) Active Licensure in Another State. Each year of active licensure in another state during the period of suspension shall offset one year of suspension for the purpose of calculating the seven years necessary to actuate the requirements of paragraph (A). If the member is not required to satisfy the requirements of paragraph (A) as a consequence of offsetting, the member shall satisfy the CLE requirements set forth in paragraph (d)(3) for each year that the member was suspended up to a maximum of seven years.
 - (2) Military Service. Each calendar year in which a suspended member served on full-time, active military duty, whether for the entire calendar year or some portion thereof, shall offset one year of suspension for the purpose of calculating the seven years necessary to actuate the requirements of paragraph (A). If the member is not required to satisfy the requirements of paragraph (A) as a consequence of offsetting, the member shall satisfy the CLE requirements set forth in paragraph (d)(3) for each year that the member was suspended up to a maximum of seven years.
- (5) Character and Fitness to Practice
The member must have the moral qualifications, competency and learning in the law required for admission to practice law in the state of North Carolina, and must show that the member's resumption of the practice of law will be neither detrimental to the integrity and standing of the Bar or the administration of justice nor subversive of the public interest.
- (6) Payment of Fees, Assessments and Costs
The member must pay all of the following:
- (A) a reinstatement fee in an amount to be determined by the Council or a \$250.00 reinstatement fee if suspended for failure to comply with CLE requirements;
 - (B) all membership fees, Client Security Fund assessments, and late fees owed at the time of suspension and owed for the year in which the reinstatement petition is filed;
 - (C) all district bar annual membership fees owed at the time of suspension and owed for the year in which the reinstatement petition is filed;
 - (D) all attendee fees, fines and penalties owed the Board of Continuing Legal Education at the time of suspension and attendee fees for CLE courses taken to satisfy the requirements of paragraphs (d)(2) and (3) above;
 - (E) any costs assessed against the member by the chairperson of the Grievance Committee, the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, and/or the secretary or council of the North Carolina State Bar; and
 - (F) all costs incurred by the North Carolina State Bar in suspending the member, including the costs of service, and in investigating and processing the application for reinstatement.
- (7) Pro Hac Vice Registration Statements
The member must file any overdue pro hac vice registration statement for which the member was responsible.
- (8) IOTLA Certification

The member must complete any IOLTA certification required by Rule .1319 of this subchapter.

(9) Wind Down of Law Practice During Suspension

The member must demonstrate that the member fulfilled the obligations of a disbarred or suspended member set forth in Rule .0128 of Subchapter 1B during the 30 day period after the effective date of the order of suspension, or that such obligations do not apply to the member due to the nature of the member's legal employment.

(e) Procedure for Review of Reinstatement Petition.

The procedure for review of the reinstatement petition shall be as set forth in Rule .0902(c)-(f) above.

(f) Reinstatement by Secretary of the State Bar.

At any time during the year after the effective date of a suspension order, a suspended member may petition for reinstatement pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (c) of this rule and may be reinstated by the secretary of the State Bar upon a finding that the suspended member has complied with or fulfilled the obligations of membership set forth in the order; there are no issues relating to the suspended member's character or fitness; and the suspended member has paid the costs of the suspension and reinstatement procedure including the costs of service and the reinstatement fee. Reinstatement by the secretary is discretionary. If the secretary declines to reinstate a member, the member's petition shall be submitted to the Administrative Committee at its next meeting and the procedure for review of the reinstatement petition shall be as set forth in Rule .0902(c)-(f).

(g) Reinstatement from Disciplinary Suspension.

Notwithstanding the procedure for reinstatement set forth in the preceding paragraphs of this Rule, if an order of reinstatement from disciplinary suspension is granted to a member pursuant to Rule .0129 of Subchapter 1B of these rules, any outstanding order granting inactive status or suspending the same member for failure to fulfill the obligations of membership under this section shall be dissolved and the member shall be reinstated to active status.

(h) Denial of Petition.

When a petition for reinstatement is denied by the council in a given calendar year, the member may not petition again until the following calendar year. The reinstatement fee, costs, and any fees paid pursuant to paragraph (d)(6) shall be retained. However, the State Bar membership fee, Client Security Fund assessment, and district bar membership fee assessed for the year in which the application is filed shall be refunded.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;

Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 7, 1995, March 7, 1996, March 5, 1998, February 27, 2003, October 1, 2003; March 2, 2006; November 16, 2006; October 8, 2009; March 11, 2010; March 10, 2011; March 8, 2012; March 8, 2013; August 27, 2013; March 6, 2014; October 2, 2014; September 22, 2016; September 20, 2018; September 25, 2020; December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .0905 PRO BONO PRACTICE BY OUT OF STATE LAWYERS

(a) A lawyer licensed to practice in another state but not North Carolina who desires to provide legal services free of charge to indigent persons may file a petition with the secretary addressed to the council setting forth:

- (1) the petitioner's name and address;
- (2) the state(s) in which the petitioner is or has been licensed and the date(s) when the petitioner was licensed;
- (3) the name of a member who is employed by a nonprofit corporation qualified to render legal services pursuant to G.S. 84-5.1 and has agreed to supervise the petitioner; and
- (4) any other matters pertinent to the petition as determined by the council.

(b) Along with the petition, the petitioner shall provide in writing:

- (1) a certificate of good standing from each jurisdiction in which the petitioner has been licensed;
- (2) a record of any professional discipline ever imposed against the petitioner;
- (3) a statement from the petitioner that the petitioner is submitting to the disciplinary jurisdiction of the North Carolina State Bar, and will be governed by the North Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct in regard to any law practice authorized by the council in consequence of the petition; and
- (4) a statement from the member identified in the petition agreeing to supervise the petitioner in the provision of pro bono legal services exclusively for indigent persons.

(c) The petition shall be referred to the Administrative Committee for review. After reviewing the petition and other pertinent information, the committee shall make a recommendation to the council regarding whether the petition should be granted.

(d) Upon receipt of a petition and other information satisfying the provisions this rule, the council may, in its discretion, enter an order permitting the petitioner to provide legal services to indigent persons on a pro bono basis under the supervision of a

member employed by a nonprofit corporation qualified to render legal services pursuant to G.S. 84-5.1. The order shall become effective immediately upon entry by the council. A copy of the order shall be mailed to the petitioner and to the supervising member. No person permitted to practice pursuant to such an order shall pay any membership fee to the North Carolina State Bar or any district bar or any other charge ordinarily imposed upon active members, nor shall any such person be required to attend continuing legal education courses.

(e) A petitioner may be a compensated employee of a nonprofit corporation qualified to render legal services pursuant to G.S. 84-5.1 and, if granted pro bono practice status, may provide legal services to the indigent clients of that corporation subject to the following conditions:

- (1) the petitioner has filed an application for admission with the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners (BLE) and has never previously been denied admission to the North Carolina State Bar for any reason; a copy of the petitioner's application shall be provided with the petition for pro bono practice;
- (2) if the petitioner is granted pro bono practice status, that status will terminate when the BLE makes its final ruling on the petitioner's application for admission; and
- (3) the petitioner is supervised in the provision of all legal services to indigent persons as set forth in Paragraph (d).

(f) A lawyer who is paid in-house counsel for a business organization with offices in North Carolina may petition under this rule to provide legal services to indigent persons on a pro bono basis under the supervision of a member employed by a nonprofit corporation qualified to render legal services pursuant to G.S. 84-5.1.

(g) Permission to practice under this rule terminates upon notice from the member identified in the petition pursuant to Rule .0905(a)(3) above, or from the nonprofit corporation employing such member, that the out-of-state lawyer is no longer supervised by any member employed by the corporation. In addition, permission to practice under this rule being entirely discretionary on the part of the council, the order granting such permission may be withdrawn by the council for good cause shown without notice to the out-of-state lawyer or an opportunity to be heard.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-7.1;
Eff. March 6, 2008;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016; September 24, 2015.*

SECTION .1000 - RULES GOVERNING REINSTATEMENT HEARINGS BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

27 NCAC 01D .1001 REINSTATEMENT HEARINGS

(a) Notice: Time and Place of Hearing:

- (1) Time and Place of Hearing. The chairperson of the Administrative Committee shall fix the time and place of the hearing within 30 days after the member's request for hearing is filed with the secretary. The hearing shall be held as soon as practicable after the request for hearing is filed but in no event more than 90 days after such request is filed unless otherwise agreed by the member and the chairperson of the committee.
- (2) Notice to Member. The notice of the hearing shall include the date, time and place of the hearing and shall be served upon the member at least 10 days before the hearing date.

(b) Hearing Panel

- (1) Appointment. The chairperson of the committee shall appoint a hearing panel consisting of three members of the committee to consider the petition and make a recommendation to the council.
- (2) Presiding Panel Member. The chairperson shall appoint one of the three members of the panel to serve as the presiding member. The presiding member shall rule on any question of procedure that may arise in the hearing; preside at the deliberations of the panel; sign the written determination of the panel; and report the panel's determination to the council.
- (3) Quorum. A majority of the panel members is necessary to decide the matter.
- (4) Panel Recommendation. Following the hearing on a contested reinstatement petition, the panel will make a written recommendation to the council on behalf of the committee regarding whether the member's license should be reinstated. The recommendation shall include appropriate findings of fact and conclusions of law.

(c) Burden of Proof:

- (1) Reinstatement from Inactive Status. The burden of proof shall be upon the member to show by clear, cogent and convincing evidence that he or she has satisfied the requirements for reinstatement as set forth in 27 NCAC 01D .0902(c) of this Subchapter.

- (2) Reinstatement from Suspension for Nonpayment of Membership Fees, Late Fee, Client Security Fund Assessment, District Bar Membership Fees, or Assessed Costs. The burden of proof shall be upon the member to show by clear, cogent and convincing evidence that he or she has satisfied the requirements for reinstatement as set forth in 27 NCAC 01D .0904(c) of this Subchapter.
 - (3) Reinstatement from Suspension for Failure to Comply with the Rules Governing the Administration of the Continuing Legal Education Program. The burden of proof shall be upon the member to show by clear, cogent and convincing evidence that he or she has:
 - (A) satisfied the requirements for reinstatement as set forth in 27 NCAC 01D .0904(c) of this Subchapter;
 - (B) cured any continuing legal education deficiency for which the member was suspended; and
 - (C) paid the reinstatement fee required by 27 NCAC 01D .1512 and .1609(a) of this Subchapter.
- (d) Conduct of Hearing:
- (1) Member's Rights. The member shall have these rights at the hearing:
 - (A) to appear personally and be heard;
 - (B) to be represented by counsel;
 - (C) to call and examine witnesses;
 - (D) to offer exhibits; and
 - (E) to cross-examine witnesses.
 - (2) State Bar Appears Through Counsel. The counsel shall appear at the hearing on behalf of the State Bar and shall have the right:
 - (A) to be heard;
 - (B) to call and examine witnesses;
 - (C) to offer exhibits; and
 - (D) to cross-examine witnesses.
 - (3) Rules of Procedure and Evidence. The hearing will be conducted in accordance with the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure for nonjury trials insofar as practicable and the Rules of Evidence applicable in superior court, unless otherwise provided by this subchapter or the parties agree to other rules.
 - (4) Report of Hearing; Costs. The hearing shall be reported by a certified court reporter. The member shall pay the costs associated with obtaining the court reporter's services for the hearing. The member shall pay the costs of the transcript and shall arrange for the preparation of the transcript with the court reporter. The member shall be taxed with all other costs of the hearing, but such costs shall not include any compensation to the members of the hearing panel.
- (e) Hearing Panel Recommendation. The written recommendation of the hearing panel shall be served upon the member within seven days of the date of the hearing.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Adopted Eff. March 7, 1996;
 Amended Eff. February 3, 2000; March 5, 1998.*

27 NCAC 01D .1002 REVIEW AND ORDER OF COUNCIL

- (a) Review by Council of Recommendation of Hearing Panel.
- (1) Record to Council:
 - (A) Compilation of Record. The member will compile a record of the proceedings before the hearing panel, including a legible copy of the complete transcript, all exhibits introduced into evidence and all pleadings, motions and orders, unless the member and counsel agree in writing to shorten the record. Any agreements regarding the record shall be included in the record transmitted to the council.
 - (B) Transmission of Record to Council. The member shall provide a copy of the record to the counsel not later than 90 days after the hearing unless an extension is granted by the president of the State Bar for good cause shown. The member will transmit a copy of the record to each member of the council no later than 30 days before the council meeting at which the petition is to be considered.
 - (C) Costs. The member shall bear all of the costs of transcribing, copying, and transmitting the record to the members of the council.
 - (D) Dismissal for Failure to Comply. If the member fails to comply fully with any of the provisions of this Rule, the counsel may file a motion the secretary to dismiss the petition.

- (2) Oral or Written Argument. In his or her discretion, the president of the State Bar may permit counsel for the state bar and the member to present oral or written argument, but the council will not consider additional evidence not in the record transmitted from the hearing panel, absent a showing that the ends of justice so require or that undue hardship will result if the additional evidence is not presented.
- (b) Order by Council. The council will review the recommendation of the hearing panel and the record and will determine whether and upon what conditions the member will be reinstated.
- (c) Costs. The council may tax the costs attributable to the proceeding against the member.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; Order of the NC Supreme Court, dated October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amended Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01D .1003 REFERRAL FROM THE BOARD

When the board refers a matter to the council for determination after a hearing by the committee, the board shall transmit to the committee:

- (1) a notice of referral from the board to the committee, clearly identifying the member whose license is in question and the nature of the matter being referred;
- (2) copies of all relevant written materials accumulated or created by the board;
- (3) copies of all written materials submitted to the board by the member whose license is in questions;
- (4) a written statement of the board's findings and determinations in the matter that is being referred.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; Order of the NC Supreme Court, dated October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1004 TIME OF HEARING

A matter referred to the committee for hearing shall be heard not less than 30 days and not more than 90 days after the date the notice of referral is received from the board by the committee.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; Order of the NC Supreme Court, dated October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1005 NOTICE OF HEARING

- (a) Time of Notice to Member - A member with respect to whom a matter has been referred for hearing shall receive notice of the hearing at least 20 days prior to the hearing.
- (b) Service of Notice on Member - The notice of hearing shall be served on the member by registered mail.
- (c) Content of Notice to Member - The notice of the hearing shall include:
 - (1) notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing;
 - (2) notice to the member that he or she may submit for consideration written materials, including a written statement of explanation, at any time prior to or during the hearing;
 - (3) notice to the member that he or she may personally appear and be heard during the hearing;
 - (4) notice to the member that he or she may be represented by counsel at the hearing.
- (d) Notice to the Board - Notice shall be transmitted to the board at least 20 days prior to the hearing of the date, time, and place of the hearing.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; Order of the NC Supreme Court, dated October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1006 THE HEARING

- (a) Nature of Inquiry: Suspension - When the matter being heard involves the question of whether a member's license shall be suspended for noncompliance, the purpose of the hearing shall be to determine, as a matter of fact:
 - (1) whether the member was in compliance with the requirements of the rules at the time the board made its determination;
 - (2) if the member was not in compliance, whether there is good cause why his or her license should not be suspended.

- (b) Nature of Inquiry: Reinstatement - When the matter being heard involves the question of whether the license of a suspended member shall be reinstated, the purpose of the hearing shall be to determine, as a matter of fact:
- (1) whether the continuing legal education deficiency which gave rise to the member's suspension had been cured at the time the board made its determination that it had not been cured;
 - (2) if the deficiency had been cured at the time the board made its determination, whether the suspended member had paid the required reinstatement fee at the time the board made its determination.
- (c) The Forum - A matter before the committee for a hearing shall be heard by a panel of three members of the committee, one of whom shall serve as the presiding member, designated as provided in Rule .1007 of this Section.
- (d) Member's Right to be Heard - A member whose license is the subject of a hearing shall have the right to:
- (1) to appear personally at the hearing;
 - (2) to speak and be heard at the hearing on any aspect of the matter being heard;
 - (3) submit for consideration relevant written materials, including a written statement of explanation, at any time prior to or during the hearing;
 - (4) be represented by counsel at the hearing.
- (e) Information from the Board:
- (1) The panel shall consider the written materials described in Rule .1003 of this Section transmitted by the board to the committee.
 - (2) A member of the board, or other person authorized by the board, may attend the hearing and may present oral or written information and argument on any aspect of the matter being heard.
- (f) Effect of Board's Findings on Issues of Accreditation and Approval - When the board has determined that a member has failed to comply with the requirements of the rules or that a suspended member has failed to cure a deficiency, upon its finding that credits essential to compliance or reinstatement were acquired in a course or program that was not properly accredited or approved:
- (1) the board's finding that the course or program was not properly accredited or approved shall be presumed by the panel to be correct; and
 - (2) the member may rebut the presumption of correctness by satisfying the panel that the course or program had in fact been properly accredited or approved; or
 - (3) the member may rebut the presumption of correctness by satisfying the panel that the board acted contrary to its rules in failing to accredit or approve the course or program.
- (g) Deliberations of the Panel - The panel shall conduct its deliberations, make its determinations, and adopt its recommendations in private.
- (h) Decision of the Panel - The panel shall consider a matter in accord with the process described in Rules .1008 and .1009 of this Section and shall put its determinations and recommendations in writing.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; Order of the NC Supreme Court, dated October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1007 THE PANEL

- (a) Assignment of Matter to Panel - A matter referred by the board for hearing and determination shall be assigned to a panel for hearing.
- (b) Members of the Panel - A hearing panel shall consist of three members of the committee.
- (c) Designation of Members - The members of a hearing panel shall be designated by the chairperson of the committee.
- (d) Designation of Presiding Member - The chairperson of the committee shall designate one of the three members of a panel to serve as the presiding member.
- (e) Duties of Presiding Member - The presiding member shall:
- (1) timely schedule the hearing;
 - (2) assure that proper and timely notice of hearing is given to the member and the board;
 - (3) preside at the hearing and rule on any question of procedure that may arise;
 - (4) preside at the deliberations of the panel;
 - (5) sign the written determinations and recommendations of the panel;
 - (6) report the panel's determinations and recommendations to the committee.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; Order of the NC Supreme Court, dated October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1008 SUSPENSION HEARING: PROCESS FOR DETERMINING A MATTER INVOLVING THE QUESTION OF SUSPENSION

When the matter before the panel is one involving the question of whether a member shall be suspended for failing to comply with the requirements of the rules, the panel shall proceed as follows:

- (1) Examination for Basis for Noncompliance Determination - The panel first shall examine the written information transmitted by the board to the committee, and shall determine whether that information provides a basis for the board's determination that the member had failed to comply with the requirements of the rules at the time the board made its determination.
- (2) When There Is No Basis for Noncompliance Determination - If the written information from the board provides no basis for a determination of noncompliance, the panel shall determine that the member is in compliance and shall report to the committee a recommendation that the member not be suspended.
- (3) When There Is Some Basis for Noncompliance Determination - If the written information from the board provides some basis for a determination of noncompliance, the panel then shall consider all information submitted to the panel or to the board by the member bearing on the issue of whether the member was in compliance with the requirements of the rules at the time the board made its determination.
- (4) Assessing the Information on the Issue of Compliance:
 - (a) Based on all the information before it, the panel shall determine whether it is persuaded that the member was not in compliance with the requirements of the rules at the time the board made its determination.
 - (b) In assessing the information on compliance, when the board's determination of noncompliance is based upon its finding that credits essential to compliance were acquired in a course or program that was not properly accredited or approved, the panel shall give that finding and any rebuttal information from the member the consideration described in Rule .1006(f) of this Section.
- (5) When the Panel Makes a Determination of Compliance - If the panel is not persuaded that the member was not in compliance with the requirements of the rules at the time the board made its determination it shall determine that the member is in compliance and shall report to the committee a recommendation that the member not be suspended.
- (6) When the Panel Makes a Determination of Noncompliance - If the panel is persuaded that the member was not in compliance with the requirements of the rules at the time the board made its determination, the panel then shall consider all information submitted to the panel or to the board by the member and submitted by the board to the panel bearing on the issue of whether there is good cause why the member's license should not be suspended.
- (7) When the Panel Determines That There Is Good Cause - If the panel is satisfied that there is good cause that the member's license should not be suspended, it shall determine that there is good cause and shall report to the committee a recommendation that the member's license not be suspended.
- (8) When the Panel Determines That There Is Not Good Cause - If the panel is not satisfied that there is good cause why the member's license should not be suspended, it shall determine that there is not good cause and shall report to the committee a recommendation that the member's license be suspended.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; Order of the NC Supreme Court, dated October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1009 REINSTATEMENT HEARING: PROCESS FOR DETERMINING A MATTER INVOLVING THE QUESTION OF REINSTATEMENT

When the matter before the panel is one involving the question of whether a suspended member shall be reinstated following a suspension for noncompliance with the rules, the panel shall proceed as follows:

- (1) Examination of the Basis for Determination That Deficiency Not Cured - The panel first shall examine the written information transmitted by the board to the committee and shall determine whether that information provides a basis for the board's determination that the deficiency for which the member's license was suspended had not been cured at the time the board made its determination.
- (2) When There Is No Basis for Determination That Deficiency Not Cured - If the written information from the board provides no basis for a determination that the suspended member's deficiency had not been cured at the time the board made its determination, the panel shall determine that the deficiency had been cured and shall report to the committee a recommendation that the suspended member be reinstated.

- (3) When There Is Some Basis for Determination That Deficiency Not Cured - If the written information from the board provides some basis for a determination that the suspended member's deficiency had not been cured at the time the board made its determination, the panel shall consider all information submitted to the panel or to the board by the member bearing on the issue of whether the deficiency had been cured at the time the board made its determination.
- (4) Assessing the Information on the Issue of Cure:
 - (a) Based upon all the information before it, the panel shall determine whether it is persuaded that the suspended member's deficiency had not been cured at the time the board made its determination.
 - (b) In assessing the information on cure, when the board's determination that the deficiency had not been cured is based upon its finding that credits essential to cure were acquired in a course or program that was not properly accredited or approved, the panel shall give that finding and any rebuttal information from the member the consideration described in Rule .1006(f) of this Section.
- (5) When the Panel Determines That the Deficiency Had Not Been Cured - If the panel is persuaded that the suspended member's deficiency had not been cured at the time the board made its determination, it shall determine that the deficiency had not been cured and shall report to the committee a recommendation that the suspended member not be reinstated.
- (6) When the Panel Determines That the Deficiency Had Been Cured - If the panel is persuaded that the suspended member's deficiency had been cured at the time the board made its determination, it shall determine that the deficiency had been cured and then shall consider all information submitted to the panel or to the board by the member and all information submitted by the board to the panel bearing on the issue of whether the reinstatement fee had been paid at the time the board made its determination.
- (7) When the Panel Determines That Reinstatement Fee Had Been Paid - If the panel is not persuaded that the reinstatement fee had not been paid at the time the board made its determination, the panel shall determine that the fee had been paid and shall report to the committee a recommendation that the member be reinstated.
- (8) When the Panel Determines That Reinstatement Fee Had Not Been Paid - If the panel has determined that the reinstatement fee had not been paid at the time the board made its determination, the panel shall determine that the fee had not been paid and shall report to the committee a recommendation that the member not be reinstated.
- (9) When the Member Submits Information Indicating Remedial Intervening Events - When a suspended member submits information indicating that, after the board's determination and prior to the hearing before the panel, the suspended member cured the deficiency (if failure to cure was a basis for the denial), the panel shall remand the matter to the board with a request that it reconsider the matter in light of the new information.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; Order of the NC Supreme Court, dated October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1010 REPORT BY THE PANEL TO THE COMMITTEE

- (a) Report by the Panel - At the first meeting of the committee following a panel's hearing a matter, the panel shall report to the committee its determinations and recommendations.
- (b) When Report Recommends Reinstatement or No Suspension - If the panel reports to the committee, in a matter involving the question of suspension, a recommendation that the member not be suspended, or, in a matter involving the question of reinstatement, a recommendation that the member be reinstated, the committee shall accept the report, and the panel's recommendation shall be the recommendation of the committee.
- (c) When Report Recommends Suspension or No Reinstatement - If the panel reports to the committee, in a matter involving the question of suspension, a recommendation that the member be suspended, or, in a matter involving the question of reinstatement, a recommendation that the member not be reinstated, the committee shall consider the information reported by the panel and shall determine whether there is any basis for the panel's recommendation.
- (d) When Information Contains No Basis for Panel's Recommendation - If the information reported by the panel contains no basis for the panel's recommendation of suspension or its recommendation of no reinstatement, the committee shall reject the panel's recommendation and shall recommend, in a suspension matter, that the member not be suspended or, in a reinstatement matter, that the member be reinstated.
- (e) When Information Contains Some Basis for Panel's Recommendation - If the information reported by the panel contains some basis for the panel's recommendation of suspension, or its recommendation of no reinstatement, the committee shall

accept the panel's recommendation and shall recommend, in a suspension matter, that the member be suspended or, in a reinstatement matter, that the member not be reinstated.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; Order of the NC Supreme Court, dated October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1011 REPORT BY THE COMMITTEE TO THE COUNCIL

At the first meeting of the council following the committee's receiving the report of a panel on a matter, the committee shall report to the council for final action the committee's recommendation in the matter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; Order of the NC Supreme Court, dated October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

SECTION .1100 - RESERVED FOR FUTURE CODIFICATION

SECTION .1200 - RESERVED FOR FUTURE CODIFICATION

SECTION .1300 - RULES GOVERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PLAN FOR INTEREST ON LAWYERS' TRUST ACCOUNTS (IOLTA)

27 NCAC 01D .1301 PURPOSE

(a) The IOLTA Board of Trustees (board) shall carry out the provisions of the Plan for Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts and administer the IOLTA program (NC IOLTA). Any funds remitted to the North Carolina State Bar from banks by reason of interest earned on general trust accounts established by lawyers pursuant to Rule 1.15-2(b) of the Rules of Professional Conduct or interest earned on trust or escrow accounts maintained by settlement agents pursuant to G.S. 45A-9 shall be deposited by the North Carolina State Bar through the board in a special account or accounts which shall be segregated from other funds of whatever nature received by the State Bar.

(b) The funds received, and any interest, dividends, or other proceeds earned on or with respect to these funds, net of banking charges described in section .1316(e)(1), shall be used for programs concerned with the improvement of the administration of justice, under the supervision and direction of the NC IOLTA Board. The board will award grants or non-interest bearing loans under the four categories approved by the North Carolina Supreme Court being mindful of its tax exempt status and the IRS rulings that private interests of the legal profession are not to be funded with IOLTA funds.

(c) The programs for which the funds may be awarded are:

- (1) providing civil legal services for indigents;
- (2) enhancement and improvement of grievance and disciplinary procedures to protect the public more fully from incompetent or unethical attorneys;
- (3) development and maintenance of a fund for student loans to enable meritorious persons to obtain a legal education who would not otherwise have adequate funds for this purpose;
- (4) such other programs designed to improve the administration of justice as may from time to time be proposed by the board and approved by the Supreme Court of North Carolina.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amended Eff. March 8, 2012; March 6, 2008; March 6, 1997; April 3, 1996.

27 NCAC 01D .1302 JURISDICTION: AUTHORITY

The Board of Trustees of the North Carolina State Bar Plan for Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) is created as a standing committee by the North Carolina State Bar Council pursuant to Chapter 84 of the North Carolina General Statutes for the disposition of funds received by the North Carolina State Bar from interest on trust accounts or from other sources intended for the provision of legal services to the indigent and the improvement of the administration of justice.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

*Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amended Effective March 8, 2007.*

27 NCAC 01D .1303 OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for operating the program of the board rests with the governing body of the board, subject to the statutes governing the practice of law, the authority of the council and the rules of governance of the board.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .1304 SIZE OF BOARD

The board shall have nine members, at least six of whom must be attorneys in good standing and authorized to practice law in the state of North Carolina.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .1305 LAY PARTICIPATION

The board may have no more than three members who are not licensed attorneys.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .1306 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS; WHEN; REMOVAL

The members of the board shall be appointed by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar. The council will make appointments for upcoming vacancies occurring at the end of a member's term prior to the term ending on August 31. Vacancies occurring by reason of death, resignation or removal shall be filled by appointment of the council at the next quarterly meeting following the event giving rise to the vacancy, and the person so appointed shall serve for the balance of the vacated term. Any member of the board may be removed at any time by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the council in session at a regularly called meeting.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court March 1, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .1307 TERM OF OFFICE

Each member who is appointed to the board shall serve for a term of three years beginning on September 1.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .1308 STAGGERED TERMS

It is intended that members of the board shall be elected to staggered terms such that three members are appointed in each year.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .1309 SUCCESSION

Each member of the board shall be entitled to serve for two full three-year terms. No member shall serve more than two consecutive three-year terms, in addition to service prior to the beginning of a full three-year term, without having been off the board for at least three years.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1310 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

The chairperson of the board shall be appointed from time to time as necessary by the council. The term of such individual as chairperson shall be for one year. The chairperson may be reappointed thereafter during his or her tenure on the board. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the board, shall prepare and present to the council the annual report of the board, and generally shall represent the board in its dealings with the public.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .1311 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The vice chairperson of the board shall be appointed from time to time as necessary by the council. The term of such individual as vice chairperson shall be one year. The vice-chairperson may be reappointed thereafter during tenure on the board. The vice chairperson shall preside at and represent the board in the absence of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him or her by the chairperson or by the board.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .1312 SOURCE OF FUNDS

Funding for the program carried out by the board shall come from funds remitted from depository institutions by reason of interest earned on trust accounts established by lawyers pursuant to Rule 1.15 of the Rules of Professional Conduct and Rule .1316 of this subchapter or interest earned on trust or escrow accounts maintained by settlement agents pursuant to G.S. 45A-9; voluntary contributions from lawyers; and interest, dividends, or other proceeds earned on the board's funds from investments or from other sources intended for the provision of legal services to the indigent and the improvement of the administration of justice.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 8, 2012; February 5, 2009; March 8, 2007.*

27 NCAC 01D .1313 FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

All funds of the board shall be considered funds of the North Carolina State Bar, with the beneficial interest in those funds being vested in the board for grants to qualified applicants in the public interest, less administrative costs. These funds shall be administered and disbursed by the board in accordance with rules or policies developed by the North Carolina State Bar and approved by the North Carolina Supreme Court. The funds shall be used only to pay the administrative costs of the IOLTA program and to fund grants approved by the board under the four categories approved by the North Carolina Supreme Court as outlined above.

(a) Maintenance of Accounts: Audit - The funds of the IOLTA program shall be maintained in a separate account from funds of the North Carolina State Bar such that the funds and expenditures therefrom can be readily identified. The accounts of the board shall be audited on an annual basis. The audit will be conducted after the books are closed at a time determined by the auditors, but not later than April 30 of the year following the year for which the audit is to be conducted.

(b) Investment Criteria - The funds of the board shall be handled, invested and reinvested in accordance with investment policies adopted by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar for handling of dues, rents, and other revenues received by the North Carolina State Bar in carrying out its official duties.

(c) Disbursements - Disbursement of funds of the board in the nature of grants to qualified applicants in the public interest, less administrative costs, shall be made by the board in accordance with policies developed by the North Carolina State Bar and approved by the North Carolina Supreme Court. The board shall adopt an annual operational budget and disbursements shall be made in accordance with the budget as adopted. The board shall determine the signatories on the IOLTA accounts.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 28, 2017;*

Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court March 1, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1314 MEETINGS

The board by resolution may set regular meeting dates and places. Special meetings of the board may be called at any time upon notice given by the chairperson, the vice-chairperson or any two members of the board. Notice of the meeting shall be given to all members of the board at least two days prior to the meeting as directed by the board. Notice shall also be provided as required by any statutory provision regulating notice of public meetings of agencies of the state. A quorum of the board for conducting its official business shall be a majority of the total membership of the board.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court March 1, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .1315 ANNUAL REPORT

The board shall prepare at least annually a report of its activities and shall present same to the council one month prior to its annual meeting.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .1316 IOLTA ACCOUNTS

(a) IOLTA Account Defined. Pursuant to order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, every general trust account, as defined in the Rules of Professional Conduct, must be an interest or dividend-bearing account. (As used herein, "interest" shall refer to both interest and dividends.) Funds deposited in a general, interest-bearing trust account must be available for withdrawal upon request and without delay (subject to any notice period that the bank is required to reserve by law or regulation). Additionally, pursuant to G.S. 45A-9, a settlement agent who maintains a trust or escrow account for the purposes of receiving and disbursing closing funds and loan funds shall direct that any interest earned on funds held in that account be paid to the North Carolina State Bar to be used for the purposes authorized under the Interest on Lawyers' Trust Account Program according to Section .1316(d) below. For the purposes of these rules, all such accounts shall be known as "IOLTA Accounts" (also referred to as "Accounts").

(b) Eligible Banks. Lawyers may only maintain an IOLTA Account at banks and savings and loan associations chartered under North Carolina or federal law, as required by Rule 1.15 of the Rules of Professional Conduct, that offer and maintain IOLTA Accounts that comply with the requirements set forth in this Subchapter (Eligible Banks). Settlement agents shall maintain any IOLTA Account as defined by G.S. 45A-9 and Paragraph (a) above only at an Eligible Bank; however, a settlement agent that is not a lawyer may maintain an IOLTA Account at any bank that is insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and has a certificate of authority to transact business from the North Carolina Secretary of State, provided the bank is approved by NC IOLTA. The determination of whether a bank is eligible shall be made by NC IOLTA, which shall maintain (i) a list of participating Eligible Banks available to all members of the State Bar and to all settlement agents, and (ii) a list of banks approved for non-lawyer settlement agent IOLTA Accounts available to non-lawyer settlement agents. A bank that fails to meet the requirements of this Subchapter shall be subject only to termination of its eligible or approved status by NC IOLTA. A violation of this Rule shall not be the basis for civil liability.

(c) Notice Upon Opening or Closing IOLTA Account. Every lawyer/law firm or settlement agent maintaining IOLTA Accounts shall advise NC IOLTA of the establishment or closing of each IOLTA Account. Such notice shall include (i) the name of the bank where the account is maintained, (ii) the name of the account, (iii) the account number, and (iv) the names and bar numbers of the lawyers in the firm and/or the names of any non-lawyer settlement agents maintaining the account. The North Carolina State Bar shall furnish to each lawyer/law firm or settlement agent maintaining an IOLTA Account a notice to clients explaining the program, which shall be exhibited in the office of the lawyer/law firm or settlement agent.

(d) Directive to Bank. Every lawyer/law firm or settlement agent maintaining a North Carolina IOLTA Account shall direct any bank in which an IOLTA Account is maintained to:

- (1) remit interest, less any deduction for allowable reasonable bank service charges or fees, (as used herein, "service charges" shall include any charge or fee charged by a bank on an IOLTA Account) as defined in Paragraph (e), at least quarterly to NC IOLTA;

- (2) transmit with each remittance to NC IOLTA a statement showing for each account: (i) the name of the lawyer/law firm or settlement agent maintaining the account, (ii) the lawyer/law firm's or settlement agent's IOLTA Account number, (iii) the earnings period, (iv) the average balance of the account for the earnings period, (v) the type of account, (vi) the rate of interest applied in computing remittance, (vii) the amount of any service charges for the earnings period, and (viii) the net remittance for the earnings period; and
 - (3) transmit to the lawyer/law firm or settlement agent maintaining the account a report showing the amount remitted to NC IOLTA, the earnings period, and the rate of interest applied in computing the remittance.
- (e) Allowable Reasonable Service Charges. Eligible Banks may elect to waive any or all service charges on IOLTA Accounts. If a bank does not waive service charges on IOLTA Accounts, allowable reasonable service charges may be assessed but only against interest earned on the IOLTA Account or funds deposited by the lawyer/law firm or settlement agent in the IOLTA Account for the purpose of paying such charges. Allowable reasonable service charges may be deducted from interest on an IOLTA Account only at the rates and in accordance with the bank's standard practice for comparable non-IOLTA accounts. Allowable reasonable service charges for IOLTA Accounts are: (i) a reasonable Account maintenance fee, (ii) per check charges, (iii) per deposit charges, (iv) a fee in lieu of a minimum balance, (v) federal deposit insurance fees, and (vi) automated transfer (Sweep) fees. All service charges other than allowable reasonable service charges assessed against an IOLTA Account are the responsibility of and shall be paid by the lawyer/law firm or settlement agent. No service charges in excess of the interest earned on the Account for any month or quarter shall be deducted from interest earned on other IOLTA Accounts or from the principal of the Account.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 6, 2008; February 5, 2009; January 28, 2010;
March 8, 2012; August 23, 2012;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court March 1, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's
minutes March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .1317 COMPARABILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR IOLTA ACCOUNTS

- (a) Comparability of Interest Rate. Eligible Banks that offer and maintain IOLTA Accounts must pay to an IOLTA Account the highest interest rate generally available from the bank to non-IOLTA Accounts (Comparable Rate) when the IOLTA Account meets or exceeds the same minimum balance or other account eligibility qualifications, if any. In determining the highest interest rate generally available from the bank to non-IOLTA accounts, an Eligible Bank may consider factors, in addition to the IOLTA account balance, customarily considered by the bank when setting interest rates for its customers, provided that such factors do not discriminate between IOLTA accounts and non-IOLTA accounts.
- (b) Options for Satisfying Requirement. An Eligible Bank may satisfy the Comparable Rate requirement by electing one of the following options:
- (1) use an account product that has a Comparable Rate;
 - (2) without actually changing the IOLTA Account to the bank's Comparable Rate product, pay the Comparable Rate on the IOLTA Account; or
 - (3) pay the benchmark rate (Benchmark), which shall be determined by NC IOLTA periodically, but not more frequently than every six months, to reflect the overall Comparable Rate for the NC IOLTA program. The Benchmark shall be a rate equal to the greater of: (i) 0.65 percent or (ii) 65 percent of the Federal Funds Target Rate as of the first business day of the IOLTA remitting period, and shall be net of allowable reasonable service charges. When applicable, NC IOLTA will express the Benchmark in relation to the Federal Funds Target Rate.
- (c) Options for Account Types. An IOLTA Account may be established as:
- (1) subject to Paragraph (d), a business checking account with an automated investment feature (Sweep Account), such as an overnight investment in financial institution daily repurchase agreements or money market funds invested solely in or fully collateralized by US government securities, which are US Treasury obligations and obligations issued or guaranteed as to principal and interest by the United States or any agency or instrumentality thereof;
 - (2) a checking account paying preferred interest rates, such as market based or indexed rates;
 - (3) a public funds interest-bearing checking account, such as accounts used for governmental agencies and other non-profit organizations;
 - (4) an interest-bearing checking account such as a negotiable order of withdrawal (NOW) account, or business checking account with interest; or

- (5) any other suitable interest-bearing deposit account offered by the bank to its non-IOLTA customers.
- (d) Financial Requirements for Sweep Accounts. If a bank establishes an IOLTA Account as described in Paragraph (c)(1), the following requirements must be satisfied: an overnight investment in a financial institution daily repurchase agreement shall be fully collateralized by United States government securities, as described in this Rule, and may be established only with an Eligible Bank that is "well capitalized" or "adequately capitalized" as those terms are defined by applicable federal statutes and regulations. A "money market fund" is an investment company registered under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended, that is qualified to hold itself out to investors as a money market fund under Rules and Regulations adopted by the Securities and Exchange Commission pursuant to said Act. A money market fund shall be invested solely in United States government securities or repurchase agreements fully collateralized by United States government securities, as described in this Rule, and, at the time of the investment, shall have total assets of at least two hundred fifty million dollars (\$250,000,000).
- (e) Interest Calculation. Interest shall be calculated in accordance with an Eligible Bank's standard practice for comparable non-IOLTA Accounts.
- (f) Higher Rates and Waiver of Service Charges Allowed. Nothing in this rule shall preclude a participating bank from paying a higher interest rate than described above or electing to waive any service charges on IOLTA Accounts.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. July 1, 2010.*

27 NCAC 01D .1318 CONFIDENTIALITY

- (a) As used in this rule, "confidential information" means all information regarding IOLTA account(s) other than (1) a lawyer's/law firm's or settlement agent's status as a participant, former participant, or non-participant in NC IOLTA, and (2) information regarding the policies and practices of any bank in respect of IOLTA trust accounts, including rates of interest paid, service charge policies, the number of IOLTA accounts at such bank, the total amount on deposit in all IOLTA accounts at such bank, the total amounts of interest paid to NC IOLTA, and the total amount of service charges imposed by such bank upon such accounts.
- (b) Confidential information shall not be disclosed by the staff or trustees of NC IOLTA to any person or entity, except that confidential information may be disclosed (1) to any chairperson of the grievance committee, staff attorney, or investigator of the North Carolina State Bar upon his or her written request specifying the information requested and stating that the request is made in connection with a grievance complaint or investigation regarding one or more trust accounts of a lawyer/law firm or settlement agent; or (2) in response to a lawful order or other process issued by a court of competent jurisdiction, or a subpoena, investigative demand, or similar notice issued by a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency.

*History Note: Authority - Order of the NC Supreme Court;
Eff. March 6, 2008;
Recodified from Rule .1317 Eff. July 1, 2010;
Amended Eff. March 8, 2012.*

27 NCAC 01D .1319 CERTIFICATION

Every lawyer admitted to practice in North Carolina shall certify annually on or before June 30 to the North Carolina State Bar that all general trust accounts maintained by the lawyer or his or her law firm are established and maintained as IOLTA accounts as prescribed by Rule 1.15 of the Rules of Professional Conduct and Rule .1316 of this subchapter or that the lawyer does not maintain any general trust account(s) for North Carolina client funds. Any lawyer acting as a settlement agent who maintains a trust or escrow account used for the purpose of receiving and disbursing closing and loan funds shall certify annually on or before June 30 to the North Carolina State Bar that such accounts are established and maintained as IOLTA accounts as prescribed by G.S. 45A-9 and Rule .1316 of this subchapter.

*History Note: Authority - Order of the N.C. Supreme Court;
Approved by the Supreme Court: March 6, 2008;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 5, 2009;
Recodified from Rule .1318 Eff. July 1, 2010;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 8, 2012;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court March 1, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .1320 NONCOMPLIANCE

Every lawyer must comply with all of the administrative requirements of this Rule, including the certification required in Rule .1319 of this Subchapter. A lawyer's failure to comply with the mandatory provisions of this Subchapter shall be reported to the Administrative Committee which may initiate proceedings to suspend administratively the lawyer's active membership status and eligibility to practice law pursuant to Rule .0903 of this Subchapter.

*History Note: Order of the N.C. Supreme Court;
Adopted Eff. March 6, 2008;
Amended Eff. January 28, 2010;
Recodified from Rule .1319 Eff. July 1, 2010.*

27 NCAC 01D .1321 SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this plan or the application thereof is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or application of the plan which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of the plan are severable.

*History Note: Order of the N.C. Supreme Court;
Eff. March 6, 2008;
Recodified from Rule .1320 Eff. July 1, 2010.*

SECTION .1400 - RULES GOVERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CLIENT SECURITY FUND OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR

27 NCAC 01D .1401 PURPOSE; DEFINITIONS

(a) The Client Security Fund of the North Carolina State Bar was established by the Supreme Court of North Carolina pursuant to an order dated August 29, 1984. The fund is a standing committee of the North Carolina State Bar Council pursuant to an order of the Supreme Court dated October 10, 1984, as amended. Its purpose is to reimburse, in whole or in part in appropriate cases and subject to the provisions and limitations of the Supreme Court's orders and these Rules, clients who have suffered financial loss as the result of misuse of entrusted property by attorneys engaged in the private practice of law in North Carolina, which conduct occurred on or after January 1, 1985.

(b) As used herein the following terms have the meaning indicated.

- (1) "Applicant" shall mean a person who has suffered a reimbursable loss and has filed an application for reimbursement.
- (2) "Attorney" shall mean an attorney who, at the time of alleged conduct resulting in a reimbursable loss, was licensed to practice law by the North Carolina State Bar. The fact that the alleged conduct took place outside the state of North Carolina does not necessarily mean that the attorney was not engaged in the practice of law in North Carolina.
- (3) "Board" shall mean the Board of Trustees of the Client Security Fund.
- (4) "Council" shall mean the North Carolina State Bar Council.
- (5) "Dishonest conduct" shall mean wrongful acts committed by an attorney against an applicant in the nature of embezzlement from the applicant or the wrongful taking or conversion of monies or other property of the applicant, which monies or other property were entrusted to the attorney by the applicant by reason of an attorney-client relationship between the attorney and the applicant or by reason of a fiduciary relationship between the attorney and the applicant customary to the practice of law. Dishonest conduct may include an attorney's failure to provide meaningful legal services for which an applicant advanced fees.
- (6) "Entrusted property" denotes trust funds, fiduciary funds and other property belonging to someone other than the attorney which is in the attorney's possession or control in connection with the performance of legal services or professional fiduciary services.
- (7) "Fund" shall mean the Client Security Fund of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (8) "General trust account" shall mean an account maintained by an attorney for the deposit of trust funds that is not dedicated for the sole benefit of a single client or transaction.
- (9) "Mishandling of funds" shall mean failing to properly receive, deposit, or disburse entrusted funds.
- (10) "Mismanagement of a general trust account" shall mean failing to create or maintain sufficient records to identify the client for whom entrusted were received or disbursed, the amount of funds held in the trust

account for each client at any given time, and/or the recipients and amounts of all disbursements from the trust account.

- (11) "Misuse of entrusted property" shall mean actions of an attorney that
 - (A) deprived a client of entrusted property to which the client was entitled, and
 - (B) that were dishonest or that constituted mishandling of funds or mismanagement of a general trust account.
- (12) "Reimbursable losses" shall mean only those losses of money or other property which occurred on or after January 1, 1985, for which the applicant has complied with these Rules and exhausted all viable means to collect, and were caused by misuse of entrusted property in one of the following circumstances:
 - (A) by the dishonest conduct of an attorney acting either as an attorney for the applicant or in a fiduciary capacity for the benefit of the applicant customary to the private practice of law in the matter in which the loss arose; or
 - (B) by mismanagement of a general trust account or by mishandling of funds, by an attorney who was subsequently enjoined by court order from handling trust or fiduciary funds, where the claimant was a client of the attorney, where the attorney received entrusted property from or for the benefit of the claimant, and where a court ordered funds from that enjoined attorney's general trust account to be disbursed to the Fund;
- (13) The following shall not be deemed "reimbursable losses":
 - (A) losses of spouses, parents, grandparents, children and siblings (including foster and half relationships), partners, associates or employees of the attorney(s) causing the losses;
 - (B) losses covered by any bond, security agreement or insurance contract, to the extent covered thereby;
 - (C) losses incurred by any business entity with which the attorney or any person described in Part (b)(13)(A) of this Rule is an officer, director, shareholder, partner, joint venturer, promoter or employee;
 - (D) losses, reimbursement for which has been otherwise received from or paid by or on behalf of the attorney who caused the loss ;
 - (E) losses arising in investment transactions in which there was neither a contemporaneous attorney-client relationship between the attorney and the applicant nor a contemporaneous fiduciary relationship between the attorney and the applicant customary to the practice of law. By way of illustration but not limitation, for purposes of this Rule [Part (b)(13)(E)], an attorney authorized or permitted by a person or entity other than the applicant as escrow or similar agent to hold funds deposited by the applicant for investment purposes shall not be deemed to have a fiduciary relationship with the applicant customary to the practice of law.
- (14) "State Bar" shall mean the North Carolina State Bar.
- (15) "Supreme Court" shall mean the North Carolina Supreme Court.
- (16) "Supreme Court orders" shall mean the orders of the Supreme Court dated August 29, 1984, and October 10, 1984, as amended, authorizing the establishment of the Client Security Fund of the North Carolina State Bar and approving the rules of procedure of the Fund.
- (17) "Trust funds" and "entrusted funds" shall mean funds belonging to someone other than the attorney that are received by or placed under the control of the attorney in connection with the performance of legal services.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994. Amendments approved by the Supreme Court: August 20, 2025.

27 NCAC 01D .1402 JURISDICTION: AUTHORITY

(a) G.S. 84 vests in the State Bar authority to control the discipline, disbarment, and restoration of licenses of attorneys; to formulate and adopt rules of professional ethics and conduct; and to do all such things necessary in the furtherance of the purposes of the statutes governing the practice of the law as are not themselves prohibited by law. G.S. 84-22 authorizes the State Bar to establish such committees, standing or special, as from time to time the council deems appropriate for the proper discharge of its duties; and to determine the number of members, composition, method of appointment or election, functions, powers and duties, structure, authority to act, and other matters relating to such committees. The rules of the State Bar, as adopted and amended from time to time, are subject to approval by the Supreme Court under G.S. 84-21.

(b) The Supreme Court orders, entered in the exercise of the Supreme Court's inherent power to supervise and regulate attorney conduct, authorized the establishment of the Fund, as a standing committee of the council, to be administered by the State Bar under rules and regulations approved by the Supreme Court.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1403 OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for operating the Fund and the program of the board rests with the board, subject to the Supreme Court orders, the statutes governing the practice of law, the authority of the council, and the rules of the board.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1404 SIZE OF BOARD

The board shall have five members, four of whom must be attorneys in good standing and authorized to practice law in the state of North Carolina.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1405 LAY PARTICIPATION

The board shall have one member who is not a licensed attorney.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1406 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS; WHEN; REMOVAL

The members of the board shall be appointed by the council. Any member of the board may be removed at any time by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the council at a regularly called meeting. Vacancies occurring by reason of death, disability, resignation, or removal of a member shall be filled by appointment of the president of the State Bar with the approval of the council at its next quarterly meeting following the event giving rise to the vacancy, and the person so appointed shall serve for the balance of the vacated term.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1407 TERM OF OFFICE

Each member who is appointed to the board, other than a member appointed to fill a vacancy created by the death, disability, removal or resignation of a member, shall serve for a term of five years beginning as of the first day of the month following the date upon which the appointment is made by the council. A member appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve the remainder of the vacated term.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1408 STAGGERED TERMS

It is intended that members of the board shall be elected to staggered terms such that one member is appointed in each year.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1409 SUCCESSION

Each member of the board shall be entitled to serve for one full five-year term. A member appointed to fill a vacated term may be appointed to serve one full five-year term immediately following the expiration of the vacated term but shall not be

entitled as of right to such appointment. No person shall be reappointed to the board until the expiration of three years following the last day of the previous term of such person on the board.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1410 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

The chairperson of the board shall be appointed from the members of the board annually by the council. The term of the chairperson shall be one year. The chairperson may be reappointed by the council thereafter during tenure on the board. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the board, shall prepare and present to the council the annual report of the board, and generally shall represent the board in its dealings with the public.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1411 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The vice-chairperson of the board shall be appointed from the members of the board annually by the council. The term of the vice-chairperson shall be one year. The vice chairperson may be reappointed by the council thereafter during tenure on the board. The vice-chairperson shall preside at and represent the board in the absence of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the chairperson or by the board.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1412 SOURCE OF FUNDS

Funds for the program carried out by the board shall come from:

- (1) assessments of members of the State Bar as ordered by the Supreme Court,
- (2) voluntary contributions,
- (3) general trust accounts when a court determines that the owners of the funds in the account cannot be identified and orders that the contents be delivered to the Fund, and
- (4) as may otherwise be received by the Fund.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments approved by the Supreme Court: August 20, 2025.

27 NCAC 01D .1413 FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

All funds of the board shall be considered funds of the State Bar and shall be maintained, invested, and disbursed as follows:

- (1) Maintenance of Accounts; Audit - The State Bar shall maintain a separate account for funds of the board such that such funds and expenditures therefrom can be readily identified. The accounts of the board shall be audited annually in connection with the audits of the State Bar.
- (2) Investment Criteria - The funds of the board shall be kept, invested, and reinvested in accordance with investment policies adopted by the council for dues, rents, and other revenues received by the State Bar in carrying out its official duties. In no case shall the funds be invested or reinvested in investments other than such as are permitted to fiduciaries under the General Statutes of North Carolina.
- (3) Disbursement - Disbursement of funds of the board shall be made by or under the direction of the secretary of the State Bar.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1414 MEETINGS

The annual meeting of the board shall be held in October of each year in connection with the annual meeting of the State Bar. The board by resolution may set other regular meeting dates and places. Special meetings of the board may be called at any time upon notice given by the chairperson, the vice-chairperson, or any two members of the board. Notice of meeting shall be

given at least two days prior to the meeting by mail, telegram, facsimile transmission or telephone. A quorum of the board for conducting its official business shall be a majority of the members serving at a particular time. Written minutes of all meetings shall be prepared and maintained.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1415 ANNUAL REPORT

The board shall prepare at least annually a report of its activities and shall present the same to the council at the annual meeting of the State Bar.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1416 APPROPRIATE USES OF THE CLIENT SECURITY FUND

(a) The board may use or employ the Fund for only the following purposes within the scope of the board's objectives as heretofore outlined:

- (1) to make reimbursements on approved applications as herein provided;
- (2) to purchase insurance to cover such losses in whole or in part as is deemed appropriate;
- (3) to invest such portions of the Fund as may not be needed currently to reimburse losses, in such investments as are permitted to fiduciaries by the General Statutes of North Carolina;
- (4) to pay the administrative expenses of the board, including employment of counsel to prosecute subrogation claims.

(b) The board with the authorization of the council shall, in the name of the North Carolina State Bar, enforce any claims which the board may have for restitution, subrogation, or otherwise, and may employ and compensate consultants, agents, legal counsel, and such other employees as it deems necessary and appropriate.

History Note: Authority - Orders of the North Carolina Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Effective December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 28, 2017.

27 NCAC 01D .1417 APPLICATIONS FOR REIMBURSEMENT

(a) The board shall prepare a form of application for reimbursement which shall require the following minimum information, and such other information as the board may from time to time specify:

- (1) the name and address of the applicant;
- (2) the name and address of the attorney who is alleged to have caused the reimbursable loss;
- (3) the amount of the alleged loss for which application is made;
- (4) the date on or period of time during which the alleged loss occurred;
- (5) a general statement of facts relative to the application;
- (6) a description of any relationship between the applicant and the attorney of the kinds described in Rule .1401(b)(12)(A) and (C) of this Section;
- (7) if the claim is based upon mismanagement of an attorney general trust account or mishandling of funds by an attorney who was subsequently enjoined by court order from handling trust or fiduciary funds, documentation that the claimant was a client of the attorney, that the attorney received entrusted property from or for the benefit of the claimant, and documentation establishing that a court ordered funds from that enjoined attorney's general trust account to be disbursed to the Fund;
- (8) verification by the applicant;
- (9) all supporting documents, including:
 - (A) copies of any court proceedings against the attorney;
 - (B) copies of all documents showing any reimbursement or receipt of compensation in payment of any portion of the loss.

(b) The application shall contain the following statement in boldface type:

"IN ESTABLISHING THE CLIENT SECURITY FUND PURSUANT TO ORDER OF THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA, THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR DID NOT CREATE OR ACKNOWLEDGE ANY LEGAL

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACTS OF INDIVIDUAL ATTORNEYS IN THE PRACTICE OF LAW. ALL REIMBURSEMENTS OF LOSSES FROM THE CLIENT SECURITY FUND SHALL BE A MATTER OF GRACE IN THE SOLE DISCRETION OF THE BOARD ADMINISTERING THE FUND AND NOT A MATTER OF RIGHT. NO APPLICANT OR MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC SHALL HAVE ANY RIGHT IN THE CLIENT SECURITY FUND AS A THIRD PARTY BENEFICIARY OR OTHERWISE."

(c) The application shall be filed in the office of the State Bar in Raleigh, North Carolina, attention Client Security Fund Board, and a copy shall be transmitted by such office to the chairperson of the board.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments approved by the Supreme Court: August 20, 2025.

27 NCAC 01D .1418 PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

(a) The board shall cause an investigation of all applications filed with the State Bar to determine whether the application is for a reimbursable loss and the extent, if any, to which the applicant should be paid from the Fund.

(b) The chairperson of the board shall assign each application to a member of the board for review and report. Wherever possible, the member to whom such application is referred shall practice in the county wherein the attorney practices or practiced.

(c) A copy of the application shall be served upon or sent by certified mail to the last known address of the attorney who it is alleged to have caused a reimbursable loss.

(d) After considering a report of investigation as to an application, any board member may request that testimony be presented concerning the application. In all cases, the attorney or his or her representative will be given an opportunity to be heard by the board if the attorney so requests.

(e) The board shall operate the Fund so that, taking into account assessments ordered by the Supreme Court but not yet received and anticipated investment earnings, a principal balance of approximately one million dollars (\$1,000,000) is maintained. Subject to the foregoing, the board shall, in its discretion, determine the amount of loss, if any, for which each applicant should be reimbursed from the Fund. In making such determination, the board shall consider, inter alia, the following:

- (1) the negligence, if any, of the applicant which contributed to the loss;
- (2) the comparative hardship which the applicant suffered because of the loss;
- (3) the total amount of reimbursable losses of applicants on account of any one attorney or firm or association of attorneys;
- (4) the total amount of reimbursable losses in previous years for which total reimbursement has not been made and the total assets of the Fund;
- (5) the total amount of insurance or other source of funds available to compensate the applicant for any reimbursable loss.

(f) The board may, in its discretion, allow further reimbursement in any year of a reimbursable loss reimbursed in part by it in prior years.

(g) Provided, however, and the foregoing notwithstanding, in no case shall the Fund reimburse the otherwise reimbursable losses sustained by any one applicant as a result of the conduct of one attorney in an amount in excess of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).

(h) No reimbursement shall be made to any applicant unless reimbursement is approved by a majority vote of the entire board at a duly held meeting at which a quorum is present.

(i) No attorney shall be compensated by the board for prosecuting an application before it.

(j) An applicant may be advised of the status of the board's consideration of the application and shall be advised of the final determination of the board.

(k) All applications, proceedings, investigations, and reports involving applicants for reimbursement shall be kept confidential until and unless the board authorizes reimbursement to the applicant, or the attorney alleged to have caused a reimbursable loss requests that the matter be made public. All participants involved in an application, investigation, or proceeding (including the applicant) shall conduct themselves so as to maintain the confidentiality of the application, investigation or proceeding. This provision shall not be construed to deny relevant information to be provided by the board to disciplinary committees or to anyone else to whom the council authorizes release of information.

(l) The board may, in its discretion, for newly discovered evidence or other compelling reason, grant a request to reconsider any application which the board has denied in whole or in part; otherwise, such denial is final and no further consideration shall be given by the board to such application or another application upon the same alleged facts.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 6, 1997;
Amendments approved by the Supreme Court: August 20, 2025.

27 NCAC 01D .1419 SUBROGATION FOR REIMBURSEMENT

(a) In the event reimbursement is made to an applicant, the State Bar shall be subrogated to the amount reimbursed and may bring an action against the attorney or the attorney's estate either in the name of the applicant or in the name of the State Bar. As a condition of reimbursement, the applicant may be required to execute a "subrogation agreement" to such effect. Filing of an application constitutes an agreement by the applicant that the North Carolina State Bar shall be subrogated to the rights of the applicant to the extent of any reimbursement. Upon commencement of an action by the State Bar pursuant to its subrogation rights, it shall advise the reimbursed applicant at his or her last known address. A reimbursed applicant may then join in such action to recover any loss in excess of the amount reimbursed by the Fund. Any amounts recovered from the attorney by the board in excess of the amount to which the Fund is subrogated, less the board's actual costs of such recovery, shall be paid to or retained by the applicant as the case may be.

(b) Before receiving a payment from the Fund, the person who is to receive such payment or his or her legal representative shall execute and deliver to the board a written agreement stating that in the event the reimbursed applicant or his or her estate should ever receive any restitution from the attorney or his or her estate, the reimbursed applicant agrees that the Fund shall be repaid up to the amount of the reimbursement from the Fund plus expenses.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1420 AUTHORITY RESERVED BY THE SUPREME COURT

The Fund may be modified or abolished by the Supreme Court. In the event of abolition, all assets of the Fund shall be disbursed by order of the Supreme Court.

History Note: Authority Orders of the NC Supreme Court, August 29, 1984, October 10, 1984;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

SECTION .1500 – RULES GOVERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

27 NCAC 01D .1501 SCOPE, PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS

(a) Scope

Except as provided herein, these rules shall apply to every active member licensed by the North Carolina State Bar.

(b) Purpose

The purpose of these continuing legal education rules is to assist lawyers licensed to practice and practicing law in North Carolina in achieving and maintaining professional competence for the benefit of the public whom they serve. The North Carolina State Bar, under Chapter 84 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, is charged with the responsibility of providing rules of professional conduct and with disciplining lawyers who do not comply with such rules. The Rules of Professional Conduct adopted by the North Carolina State Bar and approved by the Supreme Court of North Carolina require that lawyers adhere to important ethical standards, including that of rendering competent legal services in the representation of their clients.

At a time when all aspects of life and society are changing rapidly or becoming subject to pressures brought about by change, laws and legal principles are also in transition (through additions to the body of law, modifications and amendments) and are increasing in complexity. One cannot render competent legal services without continuous education and training.

The same changes and complexities, as well as the economic orientation of society, result in confusion about the ethical requirements concerning the practice of law and the relationships it creates. The data accumulated in the discipline program of the North Carolina State Bar argue persuasively for the establishment of a formal program for continuing and intensive training in professional responsibility and legal ethics.

It is in response to such considerations that the North Carolina State Bar has adopted these minimum continuing legal education requirements. The purpose of these minimum continuing legal education requirements is the same as the purpose of the Rules of Professional Conduct themselves—to ensure that the public at large is served by lawyers who are competent and maintain high ethical standards.

(c) Definitions

- (1) "Active member" shall include any person who is licensed to practice law in the state of North Carolina and who is an active member of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (2) "Administrative Committee" shall mean the Administrative Committee of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (3) "Approved program" shall mean a specific, individual educational program approved as a continuing legal education program under these rules by the Board of Continuing Legal Education.
- (4) "Board" means the Board of Continuing Legal Education created by these rules.
- (5) "Continuing legal education" or "CLE" is any legal, judicial or other educational program accredited by the Board. Generally, CLE will include educational programs designed principally to maintain or advance the professional competence of lawyers and/or to expand an appreciation and understanding of the professional responsibilities of lawyers.
- (6) "Council" shall mean the North Carolina State Bar Council.
- (7) "Credit hour" means an increment of time of 60 minutes which may be divided into segments of 30 minutes or 15 minutes, but no smaller.
- (8) "Ethics" shall mean programs or segments of programs devoted to (i) professional responsibility, or (ii) professionalism as defined in Rules .1501(c)(14) and (15) below.
- (9) "Inactive member" shall mean a member of the North Carolina State Bar who is on inactive status.
- (10) "In-house continuing legal education" shall mean courses or programs offered or conducted by law firms, either individually or in connection with other law firms, corporate legal departments, or similar entities primarily for the education of their members.
- (11) A "newly admitted active member" is one who becomes an active member of the North Carolina State Bar for the first time.
- (12) "On demand" program shall mean an accredited educational program accessed via the internet that is available at any time on a provider's website and does not include live programming.
- (13) "Online" program shall mean an accredited educational program accessed through a computer or telecommunications system such as the internet and can include simultaneously broadcast and on demand programming.
- (14) "Professional responsibility" shall mean those programs or segments of programs devoted to (i) the substance, underlying rationale, and practical application of the Rules of Professional Conduct; (ii) the professional obligations of the lawyer to the client, the court, the public, and other lawyers; or (iii) moral philosophy and ethical decision-making in the context of the practice of law.
- (15) "Professionalism" programs are programs or segments of programs devoted to the identification and examination of, and the encouragement of adherence to, non-mandatory aspirational standards of professional conduct which transcend the requirements of the Rules of Professional Conduct. Such programs address principles of competence and dedication to the service of clients, civility, improvement of the justice system, diversity of the legal profession and clients, advancement of the rule of law, service to the community, and service to the disadvantaged and those unable to pay for legal services.
- (16) "Rules" shall mean the provisions of the continuing legal education rules established by the Supreme Court of North Carolina.
- (17) "Sponsor" is any person or entity presenting or offering to present one or more continuing legal education programs.
- (18) "Professional well-being" (PWB) is a program focused on the relationship between stressors inherent in the profession, competence, professionalism, and fitness to practice. Topics may include the prevention, detection, treatment, and etiology of a range of substance use and mental health conditions, as well as resources available for assistance and strategies for improving resilience and well-being. Experiential exercises, practices, or demonstrations of tools for improving resilience and well-being are permitted provided they do not exceed a combined total of 20 minutes in any 60-minute presentation.
- (19) "Technology training" shall mean a program, or a segment of a program, devoted to education on information technology (IT) or cybersecurity (see N.C. Gen. Stat. 143B-1320(a)(11), or successor statutory provision, for a definition of "information technology"), including education on an information technology product, device, platform, application, or other tool, process, or methodology that is specific or uniquely

suitable to the practice of law. A technology training program must have the primary objective of enhancing a lawyer's proficiency as a lawyer.

- (20) "Registered Sponsor" shall mean an organization that is registered by the Board after meeting the eligibility standards in Rule .1522(b).

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 6, 1997; March 3, 1999; June 7, 2001; March 3, 2005; March 8, 2007; October 9, 2008; August 25, 2011; April 5, 2018; September 20, 2018; September 25, 2019; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court December 20, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1502 JURISDICTION: AUTHORITY

The Council of the North Carolina State Bar hereby establishes the Board of Continuing Legal Education (Board) as a standing committee of the Council, which Board shall have authority to establish regulations governing a continuing legal education program for lawyers licensed to practice law in this state.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1503 OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for operating the continuing legal education program shall rest with the Board, subject to the statutes governing the practice of law, the authority of the Council, and the rules of governance of the Board.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1504 SIZE OF BOARD

The Board shall have nine members, all of whom must be lawyers in good standing and authorized to practice in the state of North Carolina.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1505 LAY PARTICIPATION

The Board shall have no members who are not licensed lawyers.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1506 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS; WHEN; REMOVAL

The members of the Board shall be appointed by the Council. Vacancies occurring by reason of death, resignation, or removal shall be filled by appointment of the Council at the next quarterly meeting following the event giving rise to the vacancy, and the person so appointed shall serve for the balance of the vacated term. Any member of the Board may be removed at any time by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Council in session at a regularly called meeting.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1507 TERM OF OFFICE

Each member who is appointed to the Board shall serve for a term of three years beginning as of the first day of the month following the date on which the appointment is made by the Council.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1508 STAGGERED TERMS

Members of the Board shall be elected to staggered terms such that three members are appointed in each year.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1509 SUCCESSION

Each member of the Board shall be entitled to serve for one full three-year term and to succeed himself or herself for one additional three-year term. Thereafter, no person may be reappointed without having been off the Board for at least three years.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1510 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

The chairperson of the Board shall be appointed from time to time as necessary by the Council. The term of such individual as chairperson shall be one year. The chairperson may be reappointed thereafter during his or her tenure on the Board. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Board, shall prepare and present to the Council the annual report of the Board, and generally shall represent the Board in its dealings with the public.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1511 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The vice-chairperson of the Board shall be appointed from time to time as necessary by the Council. The term of such individual as vice-chairperson shall be one year. The vice-chairperson may be reappointed thereafter during tenure on the Board. The vice-chairperson shall preside at and represent the Board in the absence of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him or her by the chairperson or by the Board.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1512 SOURCE OF FUNDS

(a) Funding for the program carried out by the Board shall come from an annual CLE attendance fee and program application fees as provided below, as well as from duly assessed penalties for noncompliance and from reinstatement fees.

- (1) Annual CLE Attendance Fee – all members, except those who are exempt from these requirements under Rule .1517, shall pay an annual CLE fee in an amount set by the Board and approved by the Council. Such fee shall accompany the member's annual membership fee. Annual CLE fees are non-refundable. Any member who fails to pay the required Annual CLE fee by the last day of June of each year shall be subject to (i) a late fee in an amount determined by the Board and approved by the Council, and (ii) administrative suspension pursuant to Rule .0903 of this Subchapter.
- (2) Program Application Fee – The sponsor of a CLE program shall pay a program application fee due when filing an application for program accreditation pursuant to Rule .1520(b). Program application fees are non-refundable. A member submitting an application for a previously unaccredited program for individual credit shall pay a reduced fee.
- (3) Fee Review – The Board will review the level of fees at least annually and adjust the fees as necessary to maintain adequate finances for prudent operation of the Board in a nonprofit manner. The Council shall annually review the assessments for the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism and the North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission and adjust them as necessary to maintain adequate finances for the operation of the commissions.
- (4) Uniform Application and Financial Responsibility – Fees shall be applied uniformly without exceptions or other preferential treatment for a sponsor or member.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016; April 5, 2018; September 25, 2019; Amended Eff. July 21, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1513 FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

All funds of the Board shall be considered funds of the North Carolina State Bar and shall be administered and disbursed accordingly.

- (a) Maintenance of Accounts: Audit. The North Carolina State Bar shall maintain a separate account for funds of the Board such that such funds and expenditures therefrom can be readily identified. The accounts of the Board shall be audited on an annual basis in connection with the audits of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (b) Investment Criteria. The funds of the Board shall be handled, invested and reinvested in accordance with investment policies adopted by the Council for the handling of dues, rents, and other revenues received by the North Carolina State Bar in carrying out its official duties.
- (c) Disbursement. Disbursement of funds of the Board shall be made by or under the direction of the Secretary of the North Carolina State Bar pursuant to authority of the Council. The members of the Board shall serve on a voluntary basis without compensation, but may be reimbursed for the reasonable expenses incurred in attending meetings of the Board or its committees.
- (d) All revenues resulting from the CLE program shall be applied first to the expense of administration of the CLE program including an adequate reserve fund; provided, however, that a portion of each annual CLE fee and program application fee, in an amount to be determined by the Council, shall be paid to the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism and to the North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission for administration of the activities of these commissions. Excess funds may be expended by the Council on lawyer competency programs approved by the Council.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: December 30, 1998; November 5, 2015; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1514 MEETINGS

The Board shall meet at least annually. The Board by resolution may set regular meeting dates and places. Special meetings of the Board may be called at any time upon notice given by the chairperson, the vice-chairperson, or any two members of the Board. Notice of meeting shall be given at least two days prior to the meeting by mail, electronic mail, or telephone. A quorum of the Board for conducting its official business shall be a majority of the members serving at a particular time.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1515 ANNUAL REPORT

The Board shall prepare at least annually a report of its activities and shall present the same to the Council prior to its annual meeting.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1516 POWERS, DUTIES, AND ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

(a) The Board shall have the following powers and duties:

- (1) to exercise general supervisory authority over the administration of these rules;
- (2) to adopt and amend regulations consistent with these rules with the approval of the Council;
- (3) to establish an office or offices and to employ such persons as the Board deems necessary for the proper administration of these rules, and to delegate to them appropriate authority, subject to the review of the Council;
- (4) to report annually on the activities and operations of the Board to the Council and make any recommendations for changes in fee amounts, rules, or methods of operation of the continuing legal education program; and
- (5) to submit an annual budget to the Council for approval and to ensure that expenses of the Board do not exceed the annual budget approved by the Council.

(b) The Board shall be organized as follows:

- (1) Quorum. A majority of members serving shall constitute a quorum of the Board.
- (2) Executive Committee. The Board may establish an executive committee. The executive committee of the Board shall be comprised of the chairperson, the vice-chairperson, and a member to be appointed by the chairperson. Its purpose is to conduct all necessary business of the Board that may arise between meetings of the full Board. In such matters it shall have complete authority to act for the Board.
- (3) Other Committees. The chairperson may appoint committees as established by the Board for the purpose of considering and deciding matters submitted to them by the Board.

(c) Appeals. Except as otherwise provided, the Board is the final authority on all matters entrusted to it under this subchapter. Therefore, any decision by a committee of the Board pursuant to a delegation of authority may be appealed to the full Board and will be heard by the Board at its next scheduled meeting. A decision made by the staff pursuant to a delegation of authority may also be reviewed by the full Board but should first be appealed to any committee of the Board having jurisdiction on the subject involved. All appeals shall be in writing. The Board has the discretion to, but is not obligated to, grant a hearing in connection with any appeal regarding the accreditation of a program.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 3, 2005; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1517 EXEMPTIONS

(a) Notification of Board. To qualify for an exemption, a member shall notify the Board of the exemption during the annual membership renewal process or in another manner as directed by the Board. All active members who are exempt are encouraged to attend and participate in legal education programs.

(b) Government Officials and Members of Armed Forces. The governor, the lieutenant governor, and all members of the council of state, members of the United States Senate, members of the United States House of Representatives, members of the North Carolina General Assembly, full-time principal chiefs and vice-chiefs of any Indian tribe officially recognized by

the United States or North Carolina state governments, and members of the United States Armed Forces on full-time active duty are exempt from the requirements of these rules for any calendar year in which they serve some portion thereof in such capacity.

(c) **Judiciary and Clerks.** Members of the state judiciary who are required by virtue of their judicial offices to take continuing judicial or other legal education and all members of the federal judiciary are exempt from the requirements of these rules for any calendar year in which they serve some portion thereof in such judicial capacities. Additionally, a full-time law clerk for a member of the federal or state judiciary is exempt from the requirements of these rules for any calendar year in which the clerk serves some portion thereof in such capacity.

(d) **Nonresidents.** The Board may exempt an active member from the continuing legal education requirements if, for at least six consecutive months immediately prior to requesting an exemption, (i) the member resides outside of North Carolina, (ii) the member does not practice law in North Carolina, and (iii) the member does not represent North Carolina clients on matters governed by North Carolina law.

(e) **Law Teachers and General Assembly Employees.** An exemption from the requirements of these rules shall be given to any active member who does not practice in North Carolina or represent North Carolina clients on matters governed by North Carolina law and who is:

- (1) A full-time teacher at the School of Government of the University of North Carolina;
- (2) A full-time teacher at a law school in North Carolina that is accredited by the American Bar Association;
- (3) A full-time teacher of law-related courses at a graduate level professional school accredited by its respective professional accrediting agency; or
- (4) A full-time employee of the North Carolina General Assembly.

(f) **Special Circumstances Exemptions.** The Board may exempt an active member from the continuing legal education requirements for a period of not more than one year at a time upon a finding by the Board of special circumstances unique to that member constituting undue hardship or other reasonable basis for exemption.

(g) **Pro Hac Vice Admission.** Nonresident lawyers from other jurisdictions who are temporarily admitted to practice in a particular case or proceeding pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 84-4.1 shall not be subject to the requirements of these rules.

(h) **Senior Exemption.** The Board may exempt an active member from the continuing legal education requirements if

- (1) the member is 65 years of age or older; and
- (2) the member does not render legal advice to or represent a client unless under the supervision of another active member who assumes responsibility for the advice or representation.

(i) **Bar Examiners.** Members of the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners are exempt from the requirements of these rules for any calendar year in which they serve some portion thereof in such capacity.

(j) **Application for Substitute Compliance and Exemptions.** Other requests for substitute compliance, partial waivers, and/or other exemptions for hardship or extenuating circumstances may be granted by the Board on an annual basis upon written application of the member.

(k) **Effect of Annual Exemption on CLE Requirements.** Exemptions are granted on an annual basis and must be claimed each year. An exempt member's new reporting period will begin on March 1 of the year for which an exemption is not granted. No credit from prior years may be carried forward following an exemption.

(l) **Exemptions from Professionalism Requirement for New Members.**

- (1) **Licensed in Another Jurisdiction.** A newly admitted member who is licensed by a United States jurisdiction other than North Carolina for five or more years prior to admission to practice in North Carolina is exempt from the PNA program requirement and must notify the Board of the exemption during the annual membership renewal process or in another manner as directed by the Board.
- (2) **Inactive Status.** A newly admitted member who is transferred to inactive status in the year of admission to the North Carolina State Bar is exempt from the PNA program requirement but, upon the entry of an order transferring the member back to active status, must complete the PNA program in the reporting period that the member is subject to the requirements set forth in Rule .1518(b) unless the member qualifies for another exemption in this rule.
- (3) **Other Rule .1517 Exemptions.** A newly admitted active member who qualifies for an exemption under Rules .1517(a) through (i) of this subchapter shall be exempt from the PNA program requirement during the period of the Rule .1517 exemption. The member shall notify the Board of the exemption during the annual membership renewal process or in another manner as directed by the Board. The member must complete the PNA program in the reporting period the member no longer qualifies for the Rule .1517 exemption.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;

*Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 12, 1997; October 1, 2003; March 3, 2005;
October 7, 2010; October 2, 2014; June 9, 2016; September 22, 2016; September 25, 2019;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and October 18, 2023 and re-entered into the
Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .1518 CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

(a) Reporting period. Except as provided in Paragraphs (1) and (2) below, the reporting period for the continuing legal education requirements shall be two years, beginning March 1 through the last day of February:

- (1) New admittees. The reporting period for newly admitted members shall begin on March 1 of the calendar year of admission.
- (2) Reinstated members.
 - (A) A member who is transferred to and subsequently reinstated from inactive or suspended status before the end of the reporting period in effect at the time of the original transfer shall retain the member's original reporting period and these Rules shall be applied as though the transfer had not occurred.
 - (B) Except as provided in Subparagraph (A) above, the first reporting period for reinstated members shall be the same as if the member was newly admitted pursuant to Paragraph (1) above.

(b) Hours requirement. Each active member subject to these rules shall complete 24 hours of approved continuing legal education during each reporting period, as provided by these rules.

Of the 24 hours:

- (1) at least four hours shall be devoted to ethics as defined in Rule .1501(c)(8) of this Subchapter;
- (2) at least one hour shall be devoted to technology training as defined in Rule .1501(c)(19) of this subchapter. This credit must be completed in at least one-hour increments; and
- (3) at least one hour shall be devoted to programs on professional well-being as defined in Rule .1501(c)(18) of this subchapter. This credit must be completed in at least one-hour increments.

(c) Carryover credit. Members may carry over up to 12 credit hours from one reporting period to the next reporting period. Carryover hours will count towards a member's total hours requirement but may not be used to satisfy the requirements listed in Paragraphs (b)(1)-(3) of this Rule.

(d) The Board shall determine the process by which credit hours are allocated to lawyers' records to satisfy deficits from prior reporting years. The allocation shall be applied uniformly to the records of all affected lawyers and may not be appealed by an affected lawyer.

(e) Professionalism Requirement for New Members. Except as provided in Rule .1517(l), each newly admitted active member of the North Carolina State Bar must complete an approved Professionalism for New Attorneys program (PNA program) as described in Rule .1525 during the member's first reporting period. It is strongly recommended that newly admitted members complete the PNA program within their first year of admission. CLE credit for the PNA program shall be applied to the mandatory continuing legal education requirements set forth in Paragraph (b) above.

*History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 12, 1997; December 30, 1998; March 3, 1999;
November 6, 2001; October 1, 2003; March 11, 2010; August 25, 2011; March 6, 2014; March 5, 2015;
June 9, 2016; April 5, 2018; September 20, 2018; September 25, 2019;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's
minutes March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .1519 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The Board shall approve continuing legal education programs that meet the following standards and provisions.

- (a) They shall have significant intellectual or practical content and the primary objective shall be to increase the participant's professional competence and proficiency as a lawyer.
- (b) They shall constitute an organized program of learning dealing with matters directly related to the practice of law, professional responsibility, professionalism, or ethical obligations of lawyers.
- (c) Participation in an online or on-demand program must be verified as provided in Rule .1520(d).
- (d) Continuing legal education materials are to be prepared, and programs conducted, by an individual or group qualified by practical or academic experience. Credit shall not be given for any continuing legal education program taught or presented by

a disbarred lawyer except programs on professional responsibility and professional well-being programs taught by a disbarred lawyer whose disbarment date is at least 60 months prior to the date of the program. The advertising for the program shall disclose the lawyer's disbarment.

(e) Live continuing legal education programs shall be conducted in a setting physically suitable to the educational nature of the program.

(f) Thorough, high quality, and carefully prepared materials should be distributed to all attendees at or before the time the program is presented, unless materials are not suitable or readily available for a particular subject.

(g) A sponsor of an approved program must timely remit fees as required and keep and maintain attendance records of each continuing legal education program sponsored by it, which shall be timely furnished to the Board in accordance with Rule .1520(g).

(h) Except as provided in Rule .1523(d) of this Subchapter, in-house continuing legal education and self-study shall not be approved or accredited.

(i) Programs that cross academic lines, such as accounting-tax seminars, may be considered for approval by the Board. However, the Board must be satisfied that the content of the program would enhance legal skills or the ability to practice law.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 1, 2001; October 1, 2003; February 5, 2009; March 11, 2010; April 5, 2018; September 25, 2019; December 14, 2021; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1520 REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL

(a) Approval. CLE programs may be approved upon the application of a sponsor or an active member on an individual program basis. An application for such CLE program approval shall meet the following requirements:

- (1) The application shall be submitted in the manner directed by the Board.
- (2) The application shall contain all information requested by the Board and include payment of any required application fees.
- (3) The application shall be accompanied by a program outline or agenda that describes the content in detail, identifies the teachers, lists the time devoted to each topic, and shows each date and location at which the program will be offered.
- (4) The application shall disclose the cost to attend the program, including any tiered costs,
- (5) The application shall include a detailed calculation of the total CLE hours requested, including whether any hours satisfy one of the requirements listed in Rules .1518(b) and .1518(d) of this Subchapter, and Rule 1.15-2(s)(3) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

(b) Program Application Deadlines and Fee Schedule.

- (1) Program Application and Processing Fees. Program applications submitted by sponsors shall comply with the deadlines and Fee Schedule set by the Board and approved by the Council, including any additional processing fees for late or expedited applications.
- (2) Free Programs. Sponsors offering programs without charge to all attendees, including non-members of any membership organization, shall pay a reduced application fee.
- (3) Member Applications. Members may submit a program application for a previously unapproved out of state, in-person program after the program is completed, accompanied by a reduced application fee. Online program applications must be submitted by the program sponsor.
- (4) On-Demand CLE Programs. Approved on-demand programs are valid for three years. During this initial three-year term, sponsors shall pay an annual renewal fee each year in the amount set by the Board. After the initial three-year term, programs may be approved annually in a manner approved by the Board that includes a certification that the program content continues to meet the accreditation standards in Rule .1519 and the payment of a program recertification fee.
- (5) Repeat Programs. Sponsors seeking approval for a program, or portion of a program, that was previously approved by the Board within the same CLE year (March 1 through the end of February) shall pay a reduced application fee.

(c) Program Quality and Materials. The application and materials provided shall reflect that the program to be offered meets the requirements of Rule .1519 of this Subchapter. Sponsors and active members seeking credit for an approved program shall furnish, upon request of the Board, a copy of all materials presented and distributed at a CLE program. Any sponsor that

expects to conduct a CLE program for which suitable materials will not be made available to all attendees may be required to show why materials are not suitable or readily available for such a program.

(d) Online and On-Demand CLE. The sponsor of an online or on-demand program must have an approved method for reliably and actively verifying attendance and reporting the number of credit hours earned by each participant. Applications for any online or on-demand program must include a description of the sponsor's attendance verification procedure.

(e) Notice of Application Decision. Sponsors shall not make any misrepresentations concerning the approval of a program for CLE credit by the Board. The Board will provide notice of its decision on CLE program approval requests pursuant to the schedule set by the Board and approved by the Council. A program will be deemed approved if the notice is not timely provided by the Board pursuant to the schedule. This automatic approval will not operate if the sponsor contributes to the delay by failing to provide the complete information requested by the Board or if the Board timely notifies the sponsor that the matter has been delayed.

(f) Denial of Applications. Failure to provide the information required in the program application will result in denial of the program application. Applicants denied approval of a program may request reconsideration of such a decision by submitting a letter of appeal to the Board within 15 days of receipt of the notice of denial. The decision by the Board on an appeal is final.

(g) Attendance Records. Sponsors shall timely furnish to the Board a list of the names of all North Carolina attendees together with their North Carolina State Bar membership numbers in the manner and timeframe prescribed by the Board.

(h) Late Attendance Reporting. Absent good cause shown, a sponsor's failure to timely furnish attendance reports pursuant to this rule will result in (i) a late reporting fee in an amount set by the Board and approved by the Council, and (ii) the denial of that sponsor's subsequent program applications until the attendance is reported and the late fee is paid.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 27, 2003; March 3, 2005; October 7, 2010; March 6, 2014; April 5, 2018; September 25, 2019; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024; Amended Eff. July 21, 2024; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 20, 2025.

27 NCAC 01D .1521 NONCOMPLIANCE

(a) Failure to Comply with Rules May Result in Suspension. A member who fails to meet the minimum requirements of these rules, including the payment of duly assessed penalties and fees, may be suspended from the practice of law in North Carolina.

(b) Late Compliance. Any member who fails to complete his or her required hours by the end of the member's reporting period (i) shall be assessed a late compliance fee in an amount set by the Board and approved by the Council, and (ii) shall complete any outstanding hours within 60 days following the end of the reporting period. Failure to comply will result in a suspension order pursuant to Paragraph (c) below.

(c) Suspension Order for Failure to Comply. 60 days following the end of the reporting period, the Council shall issue an order suspending any member who fails to meet the requirements of these rules within 45 days after the service of the order, unless the member shows good cause in writing why the suspension should not take effect. Additionally, the member shall be assessed a non-compliance fee as described in Paragraph (d) below. Notice shall be served on the member by mailing a copy thereof by registered or certified mail or designated delivery service (such as Federal Express or UPS), return receipt requested, to the last known address of the member according to the records of the North Carolina State Bar or such later address as may be known to the person attempting service. Service of the notice may also be accomplished by (i) personal service by a State Bar investigator or by any person authorized by Rule 4 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure to serve process, or (ii) email sent to the email address of the member contained in the records of the North Carolina State Bar if the member sends an email from that same email address to the State bar acknowledging such service.

(d) Non-Compliance Fee. A member to whom a suspension order is issued pursuant to Paragraph (c) above shall be assessed a non-compliance fee in an amount set by the Board and approved by the Council; provided, however, upon a showing of good cause as determined by the Board as described in Paragraph (g)(2) below, the fee may be waived. The non-compliance fee is in addition to the late compliance fee described in Paragraph (b) above.

(e) Effect of Non-compliance with Suspension Order. If a member fails to meet the requirements during the 45-day period after service of the suspension order under Paragraph (c) above, the member shall be suspended from the practice of law subject to the obligations of a disbarred or suspended member to wind down the member's law practice as set forth in Rule .0128 of Subchapter 1B.

(f) Procedure Upon Submission of Evidence of Good Cause.

- (1) Consideration by the Board. If the member files a timely response to the suspension order attempting to show good cause for why the suspension should not take effect, the suspension order shall be stayed and the Board shall consider the matter at its next meeting. The Board shall review all evidence presented by the member to determine whether good cause has been shown.
- (2) Recommendation of the Board. The Board shall determine whether the member has shown good cause as to why the member should not be suspended. If the Board determines that good cause has not been shown, the member's suspension shall become effective 15 calendar days after the date of the letter notifying the member of the decision of the Board. The member may request a hearing by the Administrative Committee within the 15-day period after the date of the Board's decision letter. The member's suspension shall be stayed upon a timely request for a hearing.
- (3) Hearing Before the Administrative Committee. The Administrative Committee shall consider the matter at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The burden of proof shall be upon the member to show cause by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence why the member should not be suspended from the practice of law for failure to comply with the rules governing the continuing legal education program.
- (4) Administrative Committee Decision. If the Administrative Committee determines that the member has not met the burden of proof, the member's suspension shall become effective immediately. The decision of the Administrative Committee is final.

(g) Reinstatement. Suspended members must petition for reinstatement to active status pursuant to Rule .0904(b)-(h) of this Subchapter.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 7, 1996; March 6, 1997; February 3, 2000; October 1, 2003; October 9, 2008; August 23, 2012; Rule transferred from 27 NCAC 01D .1523 on June 14, 2023; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: May 21, 2025.

27 NCAC 01D .1522 REGISTERED SPONSORS

(a) Registered Sponsor Status. Notwithstanding the requirements of Rule .1520(b), the following rules apply to registered sponsors:

- (1) Presumptive Approval of Programs. Once an organization is approved as a registered sponsor, the continuing legal education programs sponsored by that organization are presumptively approved for credit; however, application must still be made to the board for approval of each program pursuant to Rule .1520(a). The Board will provide notice of its decision on CLE program approval requests pursuant to the schedule set by the Board and approved by the Council. A program will be deemed approved if the notice is not timely provided by the Board pursuant to the schedule. The registered sponsor may request reconsideration of an unfavorable accreditation decision by submitting a letter of appeal to the Board within 15 days of receipt of the notice of disapproval. The decision by the Board on an appeal is final.
- (2) Professionalism for New Admittees (PNA) Programs. Registered sponsors shall be permitted to provide PNA programs approved pursuant to Rule .1525 of this subchapter.
- (3) Other services provided by the Board. The CLE Board may, in its discretion, provide additional services and adjustments to registered sponsors, including but not limited to reduced program application fees, different application deadlines, and optional payment structures. However, all registered sponsors shall be treated uniformly.

(b) Eligibility Standards. The Board may, in its sole discretion, register a sponsor if it meets the following requirements:

- (1) The sponsor shall submit an application in the manner directed by the Board;
- (2) The application shall contain all information requested by the Board and include payment of an application fee in an amount set by the Board;
- (3) The sponsor must have had at least 20 programs approved for credit in the year prior to applying for Registered Sponsor status; and
- (4) The sponsor shall suitably demonstrate a history of consistent compliance with the rules of this subchapter.

(c) Annual Renewal. Registered Sponsors must renew their status annually in the time and manner directed by the Board, including the payment of an annual renewal fee in an amount set by the Board.

(d) Revocation of Registered Sponsor Status. The Board may, at any time and in its sole discretion, revoke the registration of a registered sponsor for failure to satisfy the requirements of this subchapter. A sponsor who has its status revoked may re-apply for Registered Sponsor Status pursuant to Paragraph (b) of this rule.

(e) Previously Registered Sponsors. A sponsor that was previously designated by the board as a registered sponsor prior to the effective date of this revised rule shall maintain its registered sponsor status for the duration of the CLE year in which this rule becomes effective but shall be required to renew its status annually subject to the revised eligibility requirements in Paragraph (b) of this rule.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 7, 1996; March 6, 1997; February 3, 2000; March 3, 2005; September 25, 2019; Rule transferred from 27 N.C. Admin. Code 1D .1524 on June 14, 2023 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024; Amended Eff. July 21, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1523 CREDIT FOR NON-TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

(a) Law School Courses. Courses offered by an ABA accredited law school with respect to which academic credit may be earned may be approved programs. Computation of CLE credit for such courses shall be as prescribed in Rule .1524 of this subchapter. No credit is available for law school courses attended prior to becoming an active member of the North Carolina State Bar.

(b) Service to the Profession Training. A program or segment of a program presented by a bar organization may be granted up to three hours of credit if the bar organization's program trains volunteer lawyers in service to the profession.

(c) Teaching Law Courses.

(1) Law School Courses. If a member is not a full-time teacher at a law school in North Carolina who is eligible for the exemption in Rule .1517(e) of this subchapter, the member may earn CLE credit for teaching a course or a class in a quarter or semester-long course at an ABA accredited law school.

(2) Graduate School Courses. A member may earn CLE credit by teaching a course on substantive law or a class on substantive law in a quarter or semester-long course at a graduate school of an accredited university.

(3) Courses at Paralegal Schools or Programs. A member may earn CLE credit by teaching a paralegal or substantive law course or a class in a quarter or semester-long course at an ABA approved paralegal school or program.

(4) Other Law Courses. The Board, in its discretion, may give CLE credit to a member for teaching law courses at other schools or programs.

(5) Credit Hours. Credit for teaching described in this paragraph may be earned without regard to whether the course is taught online or in a classroom. Credit will be calculated according to the following formula:

(A) Teaching a Course. 3.5 Hours of CLE credit for every quarter hour of credit assigned to the course by the educational institution, or 5.0 Hours of CLE credit for every semester hour of credit assigned to the course by the educational institution. (For example: a 3-semester hour course will qualify for 15 hours of CLE credit.)

(B) Teaching a Class. 1.0 Hour of CLE credit for every 50 – 60 minutes of teaching.

(d) In-House CLE and Self-Study. No approval will be provided for in-house CLE or self-study by lawyers, except, in the discretion of the Board, as follows:

(1) programs to be conducted by public or quasi-public organizations or associations for the education of their employees or members;

(2) programs to be concerned with areas of legal education not generally offered by sponsors of programs attended by lawyers engaged in the private practice of law; or

(3) live ethics, professional well-being, or technology training programs presented by a person or organization that is not affiliated with the lawyers attending the program or their law firms and that has demonstrated qualification to present such programs through experience and knowledge.

(e) Bar Review/Refresher Course. Programs designed to review or refresh recent law school graduates or lawyers in preparation for any bar exam shall not be approved for CLE credit.

(f) CLE credit will not be given for (i) general and personal educational activities; (ii) courses designed primarily to sell services; or (iii) courses designed to generate greater revenue.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 6, 1997; March 5, 1998; March 3, 1999; March 1, 2001; June 7, 2001; March 3, 2005; March 2, 2006; March 8, 2007; October 9, 2008; March 6, 2014; June 9, 2016; September 20, 2018; September 25, 2019; March 19, 2025; Rule transferred from 27 NCAC 01D .1602 on June 14, 2023; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1524 COMPUTATION OF CREDIT

(a) Computation Formula - Credit hours shall be computed by the following formula:

Sum of the total minutes of actual instruction / 60 = Total Hours

For example, actual instruction totaling 195 minutes would equal 3.25 hours toward CLE.

(b) Actual Instruction - Only actual education shall be included in computing the total hours of actual instruction. The following shall not be included:

- (1) introductory remarks;
- (2) breaks;
- (3) business meetings;
- (4) speeches in connection with banquets or other events which are primarily social in nature; and
- (5) unstructured question and answer sessions at a ratio in excess of 15 minutes per CLE hour.

(c) Computation of Teaching Credit - Credit may be earned for teaching in an approved continuing legal education program or a continuing paralegal education program held in North Carolina and approved pursuant to these rules at a ratio of three hours of CLE credit per each 30 minutes of presentation. Repeat programs qualify for one-half of the credits available for the initial program. For example, an initial presentation of 45 minutes would qualify for 4.5 hours of credit, and the repeat program would qualify for 2.25 hours of credit.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 3, 1999; October 1, 2003; November 16, 2006; August 23, 2012; September 25, 2019; Rule transferred from 27 NCAC 01D .1605 on June 14, 2023; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1525 PROFESSIONALISM REQUIREMENT FOR NEW MEMBERS (PNA)

(a) Content and Accreditation. The State Bar PNA program shall consist of 12 hours of training in subjects designated by the State Bar including, but not limited to, professional responsibility, professionalism, and law office management. The chairs of the Ethics and Grievance Committees, in consultation with the chief counsel to those committees, shall annually establish the content of the program and shall publish any changes to the required content on or before January 1 of each year. PNA programs may only be provided by sponsors registered under Rule .1522 of this subchapter or judicial district bars specifically approved by the Board to offer PNA programs. To be approved as a PNA program, the program must satisfy the annual content requirements, and a sponsor must submit a detailed description of the program to the Board for approval. A sponsor may not advertise a PNA program until approved by the Board. PNA programs shall be specially designated by the Board and no program that is not so designated shall satisfy the PNA program requirement for new members.

(b) Timetable and Partial Credit. The PNA program shall be presented in two six-hour blocks (with appropriate breaks) over two days. The six-hour blocks do not have to be attended on consecutive days or taken from the same provider; however, no partial credit shall be awarded for attending less than an entire six-hour block unless a special circumstances exemption is granted by the Board. The Board may approve an alternative timetable for a PNA program upon demonstration by the provider that the alternative timetable will provide an enhanced learning experience or for other good cause; however, no partial credit shall be awarded for attending less than the entire 12-hour program unless a special circumstances exemption is granted by the Board.

- (c) Online programs. The PNA program may be distributed over the internet by live streaming, but no part of the program may be taken on-demand unless specifically authorized by the Board.
- (d) PNA Requirement. Except as provided in Rule .1517(1), each newly admitted active member of the North Carolina State Bar must complete the PNA program during the member's first reporting period. It is strongly recommended that newly admitted members complete the PNA program within their first year of admission.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 3, 1999;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and October 18, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1526 PROCEDURES TO EFFECTUATE RULE CHANGES

(a) Subject to approval by the Council, the Board may adopt administrative policies and procedures to effectuate the rule changes approved by the Supreme Court on June 14, 2023, in order to:

- (1) create staggered initial reporting periods;
- (2) provide for a smooth transition into the new rules beginning March 1, 2024; and
- (3) maintain historically consistent funding for the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism and the Equal Access to Justice Commission.

(b) Carryover hours earned pursuant to the rules in effect at the time the hours are earned will carry over as total hours to the first reporting period under the amended rules.

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1527 REGULATIONS

The following regulations (Section .1600 of the Rules of the North Carolina State Bar) for the continuing legal education program are hereby adopted and shall remain in effect until revised or amended by the board with the approval of the council. The board may adopt other regulations to implement the continuing legal education program with the approval of the council.

History Note: Authority Order of the NC Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

SECTION .1600 – REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

27 NCAC 01D .1601 RESERVED

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: October 1, 2003; March 3, 2005; March 6, 2008; October 7, 2010; April 5, 2018; September 25, 2019;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1602 RESERVED

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 6, 1997; March 5, 1998; March 3, 1999; March 1, 2001; June 7, 2001; March 3, 2005; March 2, 2006; March 8, 2007; October 9, 2008; March 6, 2014; June 9, 2016; September 20, 2018; September 25, 2019;
Rule transferred to 27 NCAC 01D .1523 on June 14, 2023;

Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1603 RESERVED

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: April 5, 2018; September 25, 2019; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1604 RESERVED

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 6, 1997; March 3, 2005; March 2, 2006; March 6, 2008; March 6, 2014; Rule entitled "Accreditation of Prerecorded Simultaneous Broadcast, and Computer-Based Programs" Repealed Eff. September 25, 2019. Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1605 RESERVED

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 3, 1999; October 1, 2003; November 16, 2006; August 23, 2012; September 25, 2019; Rule transferred to 27 NCAC 01D .1524 on June 14, 2023. Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC. 01D .1606 RESERVED

History Note: Authority - Order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, October 7, 1987, 318 N.C. 711; Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: December 30, 1998; October 1, 2003; February 5, 2009; October 8, 2009; November 5, 2015; April 5, 2018; September 25, 2019; December 14, 2021; Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 14, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1607 RESERVED

27 NCAC 01D .1608 RESERVED

27 NCAC 01D .1609 RESERVED

27 NCAC 01D .1610 RESERVED

27 NCAC 01D .1611 RESERVED

SECTION .1700 - THE PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

27 NCAC 01D .1701 PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan of certified legal specialization is to assist in the delivery of legal services to the public by identifying to the public those lawyers who have demonstrated special knowledge, skill, and proficiency in a specific field, so that the public can more closely match its needs with available services; and to improve the competency of the bar by establishing an additional incentive for lawyers to participate in continuing legal education and meet the other requirements of specialization.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1702 JURISDICTION: AUTHORITY

The Council of the North Carolina State Bar (the council) with the approval of the Supreme Court of North Carolina hereby establishes the Board of Legal Specialization (board) as a standing committee of the council, which board shall be the authority having jurisdiction under state law over the subject of specialization of lawyers.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1703 OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for operating the specialization program rests with the board, subject to the statutes governing the practice of law, the authority of the council and the rules of governance of the board.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1704 SIZE OF BOARD

The board shall have nine members, six of whom must be attorneys in good standing and authorized to practice law in the state of North Carolina. The lawyer members of the board shall be representative of the legal profession and shall include lawyers who are in general practice as well as those who specialize.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1705 LAY PARTICIPATION

The board shall have three members who are not licensed attorneys.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1706 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS; WHEN; REMOVAL

The members of the board shall be appointed by the council. The first members of the board shall be appointed as of the quarterly meeting of the council following the creation of the board. Thereafter, members shall be appointed annually as of the same quarterly meeting. Vacancies occurring by reason of death, resignation, or removal shall be filled by appointment of the council at the next quarterly meeting following the event giving rise to the vacancy, and the person so appointed shall serve for the balance of the vacated term. Any member of the board may be removed at any time by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the council in session at a regularly called meeting.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1707 TERM OF OFFICE

Each member who is appointed to the board shall serve for a term of three years beginning as of the first day of the month following the date on which the appointment is made by the council. See, however, Rule .1708 of this Section.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1708 STAGGERED TERMS

It is intended that members of the board shall be elected to staggered terms such that three members are appointed in each year. Of the initial board, three members (two lawyers and one nonlawyer) shall be elected to terms of one year; three members (two lawyers and one nonlawyer) shall be elected to terms of two years; and three members (two lawyers and one

nonlawyer) shall be elected to terms of three years. Thereafter, three members (two lawyers and one nonlawyer) shall be elected in each year.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1709 SUCCESSION

Each member of the board shall be entitled to serve for one full three-year term and to succeed himself or herself for one additional three-year term. Thereafter, no person may be reappointed without having been off of the board for at least three years: provided, however, that any member who is designated chairperson at the time that the member's second three-year term expires may serve one additional year on the board in the capacity of chair.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 5, 2015; October 9, 2008.

27 NCAC 01D .1710 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

The chairperson of the board shall be appointed from time to time as necessary by the council from among the lawyer members of the board. The term of such individual as chairperson shall be one year. The chairperson may be reappointed thereafter during his or her tenure on the board. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the board, shall prepare and present to the council the annual report of the board, and generally shall represent the board in its dealings with the public.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1711 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The vice-chairperson of the board shall be appointed from time to time as necessary by the council from among the lawyer members of the board. The term of such individual as vice-chairperson shall be one year. The vice-chairperson may be reappointed thereafter during his or her tenure on the board. The vice-chairperson shall preside at and represent the board in the absence of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him or her by the chairperson or by the board.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1712 SOURCE OF FUNDS

Funding for the program carried out by the board shall come from such application fees, examination fees, course accreditation fees, annual fees or recertification fees as the board, with the approval of the council, may establish.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1713 FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

All funds of the board shall be considered funds of the North Carolina State Bar and shall be administered and disbursed accordingly.

- (1) Maintenance of Accounts: Audit - The North Carolina State Bar shall maintain a separate account for funds of the board such that such funds and expenditure therefrom can be readily identified. The accounts of the board shall be audited on an annual basis in connection with the audits of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (2) Investment Criteria - The funds of the board shall be handled, invested and reinvested in accordance with investment policies adopted by the council for the handling of dues, rents and other revenues received by the North Carolina State Bar in carrying out its official duties.
- (3) Disbursement - Disbursement of funds of the board shall be made by or under the direction of the secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina State Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1714 MEETINGS

The board by resolution may set regular meeting dates and places. Special meetings of the board may be called at any time upon notice given by the chairperson, the vice-chairperson or any two members of the board. Notice of meeting shall be given at least two days prior to the meeting by mail, electronic mail, telegram, facsimile transmission, or telephone. A quorum of the board for conducting its official business shall be four or more of the members serving at the time of the meeting.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 28, 2017; December 14, 2021.*

27 NCAC 01D .1715 ANNUAL REPORT

The board shall prepare at least annually a report of its activities and shall present same to the council one month prior to its annual meeting.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .1716 POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD

Subject to the general jurisdiction of the council and the North Carolina Supreme Court, the board shall have jurisdiction of all matters pertaining to regulation of certification of specialists in the practice of law and shall have the power and duty

- (1) to administer the plan;
- (2) subject to the approval of the council and the Supreme Court, to designate areas in which certificates of specialty may be granted and define the scope and limits of such specialties and to provide procedures for the achievement of these purposes;
- (3) to appoint, supervise, act on the recommendations of and consult with specialty committees as hereinafter identified;
- (4) to make and publish standards for the certification of specialists, upon the board's own initiative or upon consideration of recommendations made by the specialty committees, such standards to be designed to produce a uniform level of competence among the various specialties in accordance with the nature of the specialties;
- (5) to certify specialists or deny, suspend or revoke the certification of specialists upon the board's own initiative, upon recommendations made by the specialty committees or upon requests for review of recommendations made by the specialty committees;
- (6) to establish and publish procedures, rules, regulations, and bylaws to implement this plan;
- (7) to propose and request the council to make amendments to this plan whenever appropriate;
- (8) to cooperate with other boards or agencies in enforcing standards of professional conduct and to report apparent violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct to the appropriate disciplinary authority;
- (9) to evaluate and approve, or disapprove, any and all continuing legal education courses, or educational alternatives, for the purpose of meeting the continuing legal education requirements established by the board for the certification of specialists and in connection therewith to determine the specialties for which credit shall be given and the number of hours of credit to be given in cooperation with the providers of continuing legal education; to determine whether and what credit is to be allowed for educational alternatives, including other methods of legal education, teaching, writing and the like; to issue rules and regulations for obtaining approval of continuing legal education courses and educational alternatives; to publish or cooperate with others in publishing current lists of approved continuing legal education courses and educational alternatives; and to encourage and assist law schools, organizations providing continuing legal education, local bar associations and other groups engaged in continuing legal education to offer and maintain programs of continuing legal education designed to develop, enhance and maintain the skill and competence of legal specialists;
- (10) to cooperate with other organizations, boards, and agencies engaged in the recognition of legal specialists or concerned with the topic of legal specialization including, but not limited to, utilizing appropriate and qualified organizations that are ABA accredited, to prepare and administer the written specialty examinations for specialties based predominantly on federal law;

- (11) notwithstanding any conflicting provision of the certification standards for any area of specialty, to direct any of the specialty committees not to administer a specialty examination if, in the judgment of the board, there are insufficient applicants or such would otherwise not be in the best interest of the specialization program.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: November 16, 2006; December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .1717 RETAINED JURISDICTION OF THE COUNCIL

The council retains jurisdiction with respect to the following matters:

- (1) upon recommendation of the board, establishing areas in which certificates of specialty may be granted;
- (2) amending this plan;
- (3) hearing appeals taken from actions of the board;
- (4) establishing or approving fees to be charged in connection with the plan;
- (5) regulating attorney advertisements of specialization under the Rules of Professional Conduct.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1718 PRIVILEGES CONFERRED AND LIMITATIONS IMPOSED

The board in the implementation of this plan shall not alter the following privileges and responsibilities of certified specialists and other lawyers.

- (1) No standard shall be approved which shall in any way limit the right of a certified specialist to practice in all fields of law. Subject to the Rules of Professional Conduct, any lawyer, alone or in association with any other lawyer, shall have the right to practice in all fields of law, even though he or she is certified as a specialist in a particular field of law.
- (2) No lawyer shall be required to be certified as a specialist in order to practice in the field of law covered by that specialty. Subject to the Rules of Professional Conduct, any lawyer, alone or in association with any other lawyer, shall have the right to practice in any field of law, or advertise his or her availability to practice in any field of law consistent with the Rules of Professional Conduct, even though he or she is not certified as a specialist in that field.
- (3) All requirements for and all benefits to be derived from certification as a specialist are individual and may not be fulfilled by nor attributed to the law firm of which the specialist may be a member.
- (4) Participation in the program shall be on a completely voluntary basis.
- (5) A lawyer may be certified as a specialist in no more than two fields of law.
- (6) When a client is referred by another lawyer to a lawyer who is a recognized specialist under this plan on a matter within the specialist's field of law, such specialist shall not take advantage of the referral to enlarge the scope of his or her representation and, consonant with any requirements of the Rules of Professional Conduct, such specialist shall not enlarge the scope of representation of a referred client outside the area of the specialty field.
- (7) Any lawyer certified as a specialist under this plan shall be entitled to advertise that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist" in his or her specialty to the extent permitted by the Rules of Professional Conduct.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .1719 SPECIALTY COMMITTEES

(a) The board shall establish a separate specialty committee for each specialty in which specialists are to be certified. Each specialty committee shall be composed of seven members appointed by the board, one of whom shall be designated annually by the chairperson of the board as chairperson of the specialty committee. Members of each specialty committee shall be lawyers licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state who, in the judgment of the board, are competent in the field of law to be covered by the specialty. Members shall hold office for three years, except those members initially appointed who shall serve as hereinafter designated. Members shall be appointed by the board to staggered terms of office

and the initial appointees shall serve as follows: two shall serve for one year after appointment; two shall serve for two years after appointment; and three shall serve for three years after appointment. Appointment by the board to a vacancy shall be for the remaining term of the member leaving the specialty committee. All members shall be eligible for reappointment to not more than one additional three-year term after having served one full three-year term, provided, however, that the board may reappoint the chairperson of a committee to a third three-year term if the board determines that the reappointment is in the best interest of the specialization program. Meetings of the specialty committee shall be held at regular intervals at such times, places and upon such notices as the specialty committee may from time to time prescribe or upon direction of the board.

(b) Each specialty committee shall advise and assist the board in carrying out the board's objectives and in the implementation and regulation of this plan in that specialty. Each specialty committee shall advise and make recommendations to the board as to standards for the specialty and the certification of individual specialists in that specialty. Each specialty committee shall be charged with actively administering the plan in its specialty and with respect to that specialty shall

- (1) recommend to the board reasonable and nondiscriminatory standards applicable to that specialty;
- (2) make recommendations to the board for certification, continued certification, denial, suspension, or revocation of certification of specialists and for procedures with respect thereto;
- (3) administer procedures established by the board for applications for certification and continued certification as a specialist and for denial, suspension, or revocation of such certification;
- (4) administer examinations and other testing procedures, if applicable, investigate references of applicants and, if deemed advisable, seek additional information regarding applicants for certification or continued certification as specialists;
- (5) make recommendations to the board concerning the approval of and credit to be allowed for continuing legal education courses, or educational alternatives, in the specialty;
- (6) perform such other duties and make such other recommendations as may be delegated to or requested of the specialty committee by the board.

(c) The board may appoint advisory members to a specialty committee to assist with the development, administration, and grading of the examination, the drafting of standards for a subspecialty, and any other activity set forth in Paragraph (b) of this Rule. Advisory members shall be non-voting except as to any specific activity delegated to the advisory members by the board or by the chair of the specialty committee, including the evaluation of applications for certification. No more than five advisory members may be appointed to a specialty committee. Advisory members shall be lawyers licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state who, in the judgment of the board, are competent in the field of law to be covered by the specialty. Advisory members shall hold office for an initial term of three years and shall thereafter serve at the discretion of the board for not more than two additional three-year terms. Appointment by the board to a vacancy shall be for the remaining term, if any, of the advisory member being replaced.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 10, 2011; November 7, 1996.*

27 NCAC 01D .1720 MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION OF SPECIALISTS

(a) To qualify for certification as a specialist, a lawyer applicant must pay any required fee, comply with the following minimum standards, and meet any other standards established by the board for the particular area of specialty.

- (1) The applicant must be licensed in a jurisdiction of the United States for at least five years immediately preceding his or her application and must be licensed in North Carolina for at least three years immediately preceding his or her application. The applicant must be currently in good standing to practice law in this state and the applicant's disciplinary record with the courts, the North Carolina State Bar, and any other government licensing agency must support qualification in the specialty.
- (2) The applicant must make a satisfactory showing according to objective and verifiable standards, as determined by the board after advice from the appropriate specialty committee, of substantial involvement in the specialty during the five calendar years immediately preceding the calendar year of application. Such substantial involvement shall be defined as to each specialty from a consideration of its nature, complexity, and differences from other fields and from consideration of the kind and extent of effort and experience necessary to demonstrate competence in that specialty. It is a measurement of actual experience within the particular specialty according to any of several standards. It may be measured by the time spent on legal work within the areas of the specialty, the number or type of matters handled within a certain period of time or any combination of these or other appropriate factors. However, within each specialty, experience

requirements should be measured by objective standards. In no event should they be either so restrictive as to unduly limit certification of lawyers as specialists or so lax as to make the requirement of substantial involvement meaningless as a criterion of competence. Substantial involvement may vary from specialty to specialty, but, if measured on a time-spent basis, in no event shall the time spent in practice in the specialty be less than 25 percent of the total practice of a lawyer engaged in a normal full-time practice. Reasonable and uniform practice equivalents may be established including, but not limited to, successful pursuit of an advance educational degree, teaching, judicial, government, or corporate legal experience.

- (3) The applicant must make a satisfactory showing, as determined by the board after advice from the appropriate specialty committee, of continuing legal education in the specialty accredited by the board for the specialty, the minimum being an average of 12 hours of credit for continuing legal education, or its equivalent, for each of the three calendar years immediately preceding application. Upon establishment of a new specialty, this standard may be satisfied in such manner as the board, upon advice from the appropriate specialty committee, may prescribe or may be waived if, and to the extent, accreditable continuing legal education courses have not been available during the three years immediately preceding establishment of the specialty.
 - (4) The applicant must make a satisfactory showing, as determined by the board after advice from the appropriate specialty committee, of qualification in the specialty through peer review. The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least ten lawyers, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state, or in any state, or judges, who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. None of the references may be persons related to the applicant or, at the time of application, a partner of or otherwise associated with the applicant in the practice of law. The applicant by his or her application consents to confidential inquiry by the board or appropriate disciplinary body and other persons regarding the applicant's competence and qualifications to be certified as a specialist. An applicant must receive a minimum of five favorable peer reviews to be considered by the board for compliance with this standard.
 - (A) Each specialty committee shall evaluate the information provided by an applicant's references to make a recommendation to the board as to the applicant's qualification in the specialty through peer review. The evaluation shall include a determination of the weight to be given to each peer review and shall take into consideration a reference's years of practice, primary practice areas and experience in the specialty, and the context in which a reference knows the applicant.
 - (5) The applicant must achieve a satisfactory score on a written examination designed to test the applicant's knowledge and ability in the specialty for which certification is applied. The examination must be applied uniformly to all applicants within each specialty area. The board shall assure that the contents and grading of the examination are designed to produce a uniform level of competence among the various specialties.
- (b) All matters concerning the qualification of an applicant for certification, including, but not limited to, applications, references, tests and test scores, files, reports, investigations, hearings, findings, recommendations, and adverse determinations shall be confidential so far as is consistent with the effective administration of this plan, fairness to the applicant and due process of law.
- (c) The board may adopt uniform rules waiving the requirements of Rules .1720(a)(4) and (5) above for members of a specialty committee, including advisory members, at the time that the initial written examination for that specialty or any subspecialty of the specialty is given, and permitting said members to file applications to become a board certified specialist in that specialty upon compliance with all other required minimum standards for certification of specialists.
- (d) Upon written request of the applicant and with the recommendation of the appropriate specialty committee, the board may for good cause shown waive strict compliance with the criteria relating to substantial involvement, continuing legal education, or peer review, as those requirements are set forth in the standards for certification for specialization. However, there shall be no waiver of the requirements that the applicant pass a written examination and be licensed to practice law in North Carolina for five years preceding the application.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. August 27, 2013; August 23, 2012; March 8, 2012; March 10, 2011; March 3, 2005.*

27 NCAC 01D .1721 MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION OF SPECIALISTS

- (a) The period of certification as a specialist shall be five years. During such period the board or appropriate specialty committee may require evidence from the specialist of his or her continued qualification for certification as a specialist, and

the specialist must consent to inquiry by the board, or appropriate specialty committee of lawyers and judges, the appropriate disciplinary body, or others in the community regarding the specialist's continued competence and qualification to be certified as a specialist. Application for and approval of continued certification as a specialist shall be required prior to the end of each five-year period. To qualify for continued certification as a specialist, a lawyer applicant must pay any required fee, must demonstrate to the board with respect to the specialty both continued knowledge of the law of this state and continued competence and must comply with the following minimum standards.

- (1) The specialist's disciplinary record with the courts, the North Carolina State Bar, and any other government licensing agency supports qualification in the specialty.
- (2) The specialist must make a satisfactory showing, as determined by the board after advice from the appropriate specialty committee, of substantial involvement in the specialty during the entire period of certification as a specialist. Substantial involvement for continued certification shall be determined in accordance with the principles set forth in Rule .1720(a)(2) of this subchapter and the specific standards for each specialty. In addition, unless prohibited or limited by the standards for a particular specialty, the following judicial service may be substituted for the equivalent years of practice experience if the applicant's judicial service included presiding over cases in the specialty: service as a full-time state or federal trial, appellate, or bankruptcy judge (including service as a federal magistrate judge); service as a judge for the courts of a federally recognized Indian tribe; service as an administrative law judge for the Social Security Administration; and service as a commissioner or deputy commissioner of the Industrial Commission.
- (3) The specialist must make a satisfactory showing, as determined by the board after advice from the appropriate specialty committee, of continuing legal education accredited by the board for the specialty during the period of certification as a specialist, the minimum being an average of 12 hours of credit for continuing legal education, or its equivalent, for each year during the entire period of certification as a specialist.
- (4) The specialist must comply with the requirements set forth in Rule .1720(a)(1).
- (5) The specialist must make a satisfactory showing of qualification in the specialty through peer review. The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in any state and familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .1720(a)(4) of this subchapter apply to this standard.

(b) Upon written request of the applicant and with the recommendation of the appropriate specialty committee, the board may for good cause shown waive strict compliance with the criteria relating to substantial involvement, continuing legal education, or peer review, as those requirements are set forth in the standards for continued certification. Before or after taking a continuing legal education course that is not in the specialty or a related field, a specialist may petition the board to approve the program as satisfying the continuing legal education criteria for recertification. The petition shall show the relevancy of the program to the specialist's proficiency as a specialist, and be referred to the specialty committee for its recommendation prior to a decision by the board.

(c) After the period of initial certification, a specialist may request, in advance and in writing, approval from the board for a waiver of one year of the substantial involvement necessary to satisfy the standards for the specialist's next recertification. The specialist may request a waiver of one year of substantial involvement for every five years that the specialist has met the substantial involvement standard beginning with the period of initial certification. However, none of the years for which a waiver is requested may be consecutive. When a waiver of the substantial involvement requirement is granted, the specialist must satisfy all of the other requirements for recertification.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 6, 2002; February 5, 2009; March 8, 2012; August 27, 2013; March 27, 2019.*

27 NCAC 01D .1722 ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL STANDARDS

The board may establish, on its own initiative or upon the specialty committee's recommendation, additional or more stringent standards for certification than those provided in Rules .1720 and .1721 of this Section. Additional standards or requirements established under this Rule need not be the same for initial certification and continued certification as a specialist. It is the

intent of the plan that all requirements for certification or recertification in any area of specialty shall be no more or less stringent than the requirements in any other area of specialty.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .1723 REVOCATION OR SUSPENSION OF CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

(a) Automatic Revocation or Suspension of Specialty Certification Following Professional Discipline. The board shall revoke its certification of a lawyer as a specialist if the lawyer is disbarred or receives a disciplinary suspension, any part of which is or subsequently becomes active, from the Disciplinary Hearing Commission of the North Carolina State Bar, a North Carolina court of law, or, if the lawyer is licensed in another jurisdiction in the United States, from a court of law or the regulatory authority of that jurisdiction. The board shall suspend its certification of a lawyer as a specialist if the lawyer receives a disciplinary suspension, all of which is stayed. If a stayed disciplinary suspension ends without becoming active, the lawyer may be reinstated as a specialist if the lawyer applies for recertification and satisfies all of the requirements for recertification as set forth in the recertification standards for the relevant specialty. During a suspension from specialty certification, application for recertification shall be deferred until the end of the suspension. This provision, and any amendment thereto, shall apply to discipline received on or after the effective date of the provision or the amendment as appropriate.

(b) Discretionary Revocation or Suspension. The board may revoke its certification of a lawyer as a specialist if the specialty is terminated or may suspend or revoke such certification if it is determined, upon the board's own initiative or upon recommendation of the appropriate specialty committee and after hearing before the board as provided in Rule .1802 and Rule .1803, that

- (1) the certification of the lawyer as a specialist was made contrary to the rules and regulations of the board;
- (2) the lawyer certified as a specialist made a false representation, omission or misstatement of material fact to the board or appropriate specialty committee;
- (3) the lawyer certified as a specialist has failed to abide by all rules and regulations promulgated by the board;
- (4) the lawyer certified as a specialist has failed to pay the fees required;
- (5) the lawyer certified as a specialist no longer meets the standards established by the board for the certification of specialists;
- (6) the lawyer certified as a specialist received professional discipline from the North Carolina State Bar other than suspension or disbarment from practice and the board finds that the conduct for which the professional discipline was received reflects adversely on the specialization program and the lawyer's qualification as a specialist;
- (7) the lawyer certified as a specialist received professional discipline from any state or federal court or tribunal or, if the lawyer is licensed in another jurisdiction, from the regulatory authority of that jurisdiction in the United States, or the lawyer certified as a specialist was found to have engaged in misconduct by any state or federal court or tribunal, and the board finds that the conduct for which the sanctions or professional discipline was received reflects adversely on the specialization program and the lawyer's qualification as a specialist; or
- (8) the lawyer certified as a specialist was criminally convicted by any state or federal court and the board finds that the conduct underlying the conviction reflects adversely on the specialization program and the lawyer's qualification as a specialist.

(c) Report to Board. A lawyer certified as a specialist has a duty to inform the board promptly of any professional discipline received by the lawyer, any judicial finding of misconduct, any criminal conviction, or any fact or circumstance described in Rules .1723(a) and (b) above. The board may consider a lawyer's failure to promptly report in determining whether to suspend or revoke certification.

(d) Reinstatement. If the board revokes its certification of a lawyer as a specialist, the lawyer cannot again be certified as a specialist unless he or she so qualifies upon application made as if for initial certification as a specialist and upon such other conditions as the board may prescribe. If the board suspends certification of a lawyer as a specialist, such certification cannot be reinstated except upon the lawyer's application therefor and compliance with such conditions and requirements as the board may prescribe.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 5, 2004; April 5, 2018;*

Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court October 18, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .1724 RIGHT TO HEARING AND APPEAL TO COUNCIL

A lawyer who is denied certification or continued certification as a specialist or whose certification is suspended or revoked shall have the right to a hearing before the board and, thereafter, the right to appeal the ruling made thereon by the board to the council under such rules and regulations as the board and council may prescribe. (See Section .1800 of this Subchapter.)

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .1725 AREAS OF SPECIALTY

There are hereby recognized the following specialties:

- (1) bankruptcy law
 - (a) consumer bankruptcy law
 - (b) business bankruptcy law
- (2) estate planning and probate law
- (3) real property law
 - (a) real property - residential
 - (b) real property - business, commercial, and industrial
- (4) family law
- (5) criminal law
 - (a) federal criminal law
 - (b) state criminal law
 - (c) juvenile delinquency law
- (6) immigration law
- (7) workers' compensation
- (8) Social Security disability law
- (9) elder law
- (10) appellate practice
- (11) trademark law
- (12) utilities law
- (13) privacy and information security law
- (14) child welfare law

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: July 29, 1998; February 27, 2003; February 5, 2009;
March 8, 2012; March 6, 2014; April 5, 2018;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court October 18, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .1726 CERTIFICATION STANDARDS OF THE SPECIALTIES OF BANKRUPTCY LAW, ESTATE PLANNING AND PROBATE LAW, REAL PROPERTY LAW, FAMILY LAW, AND CRIMINAL LAW

Previous decisions approving the certification standards for the areas of specialty listed above are hereby reaffirmed.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .1727 INACTIVE STATUS

(a) Petition for Inactive Status. The board may transfer a certified specialist to inactive status upon receipt of a petition, on a form approved by the board, demonstrating that the petitioner satisfies the following conditions:

- (1) Certified for five years or more;
- (2) Special circumstances unique to the specialist constituting undue hardship or other reasonable basis for exempting the specialist from the substantial involvement standard for continued certification; including,

but not limited to, marriage to active-duty military personnel requiring frequent relocation, active duty in the military reserves, disability lasting a total of six months or more over a 12-month period of time, and illness of an immediate family member requiring leaves of absence from work in excess of six months or more over a 12-month period of time; and

- (3) Discontinuation of all representations of specialist certification in all communications about the lawyer's practice.
- (b) Duration of Inactive Status. If the petitioner qualifies, inactive status shall be granted by the board for a period of not more than one year at a time. No more than three years of inactive status, whether consecutive or periodic, shall be granted to any certified specialist.
- (c) Designation During Inactive Status. During the period of inactive status, the certified specialist shall be listed in the board's records as inactive. An inactive specialist shall not represent that he or she is certified during any period of inactive status; however, an inactive specialist may advertise or communicate prior dates of certification (e.g., Board Certified Specialist in Family Law 1987-2003).
- (d) Annual Requirements. During the period of inactive status, the specialist shall not be required to satisfy the substantial involvement standard for continued certification in the specialty or to pay any fees; however, the specialist shall be required to satisfy the continuing legal education (CLE) standard for continued certification in the specialty. If a five-year period of certification ends during a year of inactive status, application for continued certification pursuant to Rule .1721 of this subchapter shall be deferred until return to active status.
- (e) Return to Active Status. To return to active status as a certified specialist, an inactive specialist shall petition the board on a form approved by the board. The inactive specialist shall be reinstated to active status upon demonstration that he or she satisfied the CLE standard for continued certification in the specialty and the recommendation of the specialty committee. Passage of a written examination in the specialty shall not be required unless the inactive specialist failed to satisfy the CLE standard for continued certification during the period of inactivity.
- (f) The right to petition for inactive status pursuant to this rule is in addition to the right to request a waiver of substantial involvement allowed by Rule .1721(c) of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court September 28, 2017.

SECTION .1800 - HEARING AND APPEAL RULES OF THE BOARD OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

27 NCAC 01D .1801 INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS; RECONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS REJECTED BY SPECIALTY COMMITTEE; AND RECONSIDERATION PROCEDURE

- (a) Incomplete Applications. The executive director of the North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) will review every application to determine if the application is complete. An application is incomplete if it does not include complete answers to every question on the application and copies of all documents requested on the application. The applicant will be notified in writing if an application is incomplete. The applicant must submit the information necessary to complete the application within 21 days of the date of the notice. If the applicant fails to provide the required information during the requisite time period, the executive director will return the application to the applicant together with a refund of the application fee less a fifty dollar (\$50.00) administrative fee. The decision of the executive director to reject an application as incomplete is final unless the applicant shows good cause for an extension of time to provide the required information. This provision does not apply to an application with respect to which fewer than five completed peer review forms have been timely filed with the board.
- (b) Denial of Application by Specialty Committee. The executive director shall refer all complete applications to the specialty committee for review for compliance with the standards for certification in the specialty area for which certification is sought. After reviewing the applications, the specialty committee shall recommend to the board the acceptance or rejection of the applications. The specialty committee shall notify the board of its recommendations in writing and the reason for any negative recommendation must be specified.
 - (1) Notification to Applicant of the Specialty Committee's Action. The executive director shall promptly notify the applicant in writing of the specialty committee's recommendation of rejection of the application and the board's intention to act in accordance with the committee's recommendation. The notification must specify the reason for the recommendation of rejection of the application and shall inform the applicant of the right to petition pursuant to paragraph (c) of this rule for reconsideration of the recommendation of the specialty committee.

(c) **Petition for Reconsideration.** Within 14 days of the date of the notice from the executive director that an application has been recommended for rejection by a specialty committee, the applicant may petition the board for reconsideration. The petition shall be in writing and shall include the following information: the applicant's election between a reconsideration hearing on the written record or in-person; and the reasons for which the applicant believes the specialty committee's recommendation should not be accepted.

(d) **Reconsideration Procedure.** Upon receipt of a petition filed pursuant to paragraph (c) of this rule, a three-member panel of the board, to be appointed by the chairperson of the board, shall reconsider an application pursuant to the following procedures:

- (1) **Notice.** The chairperson of the panel shall set the time and place of the hearing to reconsider the applicant's application as soon as practicable after the applicant's request for reconsideration is received. The applicant shall be notified of the date at least 10 days prior to the time set for the hearing.
- (2) **Reconsideration on the Written Record.** If the applicant elects to have the matter decided on the written record, the applicant will not be present at the hearing and no witnesses will appear before the panel except the executive director of the specialization program, or a staff designee, who shall provide administrative support to the panel. At least 10 days prior to the hearing, the applicant shall provide the panel with copies of any documents that the applicant would like to be considered by the panel.
- (3) **Reconsideration In-Person.** If the applicant elects to be present at the hearing, the applicant may be represented by counsel or represent himself or herself at such hearing. The applicant may offer witnesses and documents and may question any witness. At least 10 days prior to the hearing, the applicant shall provide the panel with copies of any documents that the applicant wants considered by the panel and, if the reconsideration is in-person, with the names of prospective witnesses. At least ten days prior to the hearing, the applicant shall be provided with copies of any documents that the executive director will submit to the panel, except confidential peer review forms or information, and with the names of prospective witnesses. Additional documents may be considered at the discretion of the panel.
- (4) **Burden of Proof.** The applicant must make a clear and convincing showing that the application satisfies the standards for certification in the applicable specialty
- (5) **Conduct of Reconsideration Hearing.**
 - (A) **Preservation of Record.** The hearing shall be recorded unless the applicant agrees in writing that the hearing shall not be recorded or, if the applicant wants an official transcript, the applicant pays the costs associated with obtaining a court reporter and makes all arrangements for the court reporter's services and for the preparation of the transcript.
 - (B) **Procedural Rules.** The reconsideration hearing shall not be conducted according to technical rules relating to evidence and witnesses. Any relevant evidence shall be admitted and may be considered by the panel according to its probative value if it is the sort of evidence on which responsible persons are accustomed to rely in the conduct of serious affairs, regardless of any common law or statutory rule which might make improper the admission of such evidence over objection in civil actions.
 - (C) **Decision of the Panel.** The decision of the panel shall be by a majority of the members of the panel and shall be binding upon the board. Written notification of the decision shall be sent to the applicant. If the board's decision is unfavorable, the notification shall set forth the grounds for the decision and shall notify the applicant of the right to appeal the decision to the North Carolina State Bar Council (the council) pursuant to Rule .1804 of this subchapter.

(e) **Failure of Applicant to Petition the Board for Reconsideration Within the Time Allowed by These Procedures.** If the applicant does not petition the board for reconsideration of the specialty committee's recommendation of rejection of the application within the time allowed by these rules, the board shall act on the matter at its next board meeting.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. September 24, 2015; March 11, 2010; February 5, 2009; November 16, 2006; June 1, 1995.*

27 NCAC 01D .1802 DENIAL, REVOCATION, OR SUSPENSION OF CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

(a) **Denial of Continued Certification.** The board, upon its initiative or upon recommendation of the appropriate specialty committee, may deny continued certification of a specialist, if the applicant does not meet the requirements as found in Rule .1721(a) of this Subchapter.

- (b) Revocation and Suspension of Certification as a Specialist. The board shall revoke the certification of a lawyer as provided in Rule .1723(a) of this Subchapter and may revoke or suspend the certification of a lawyer as provided in Rule .1723(b) of this Subchapter.
- (c) Notification of Board Action. The executive director shall notify the lawyer of the board's action to grant or deny continued certification as a specialist upon application for continued certification pursuant to Rule .1721(a) of this Subchapter, or to revoke or suspend continued certification pursuant to Rule .1723(a) or (b) of this Subchapter. If the board's action is unfavorable, the notification shall set forth the grounds for the action and shall notify the lawyer of the right to a hearing if allowed by these rules.
- (d) Request for Hearing. Within 14 days of the date of the notice from the executive director of the board that the lawyer has been denied continued certification pursuant to Rule .1721(a) of this Subchapter or that certification has been revoked or suspended pursuant to Rule .1723(b) of this Subchapter, the lawyer must request a hearing before the board in writing. There is no right to a hearing upon automatic revocation pursuant to Rule .1723(a) of this Subchapter.
- (e) Hearing Procedure. Except as set forth in Rule .1802(f) below, the procedures set forth in Rule .1801(d) of this Subchapter shall be followed when a lawyer requests a hearing regarding the denial of continued certification pursuant to Rule .1721(a) of this Subchapter or the revocation or suspension of certification under Rule .1723(b) of this Subchapter.
- (f) Burden of Proof: Preponderance of the Evidence. A three-member panel of the board shall apply the preponderance of the evidence rule in determining whether the lawyer's certification should be continued, revoked, or suspended. The burden of proof is upon the lawyer.
- (g) Notification of Board's Decision. After the hearing, the board shall timely notify the lawyer of its decision regarding continued certification as a specialist. If the board's decision is unfavorable, the notification shall set forth the grounds for the decision and the lawyer's appeal rights under Rule .1804 of this Subchapter.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 11, 2010; February 5, 2004.*

27 NCAC 01D .1803 RECONSIDERATION OF FAILED EXAMINATION

- (a) Review of Examination. Within 45 days of the date of the notice from the board's executive director that the applicant has failed the written examination, the applicant may review his or her examination at the office of the board at a time designated by the executive director. The applicant will be given the applicant's scores for each question on the examination. The applicant shall not copy, transcribe, or remove the examination from the board's office (or any other location established by the board for the review of the examination) and shall be subject to such other restrictions as the board deems necessary to protect the content of the examination.
- (b) Petition for Grade Review. If, after reviewing the examination, the applicant feels an error or errors were made in the grading, the applicant may file with the executive director a petition for grade review. The petition must be filed within 30 days after the last day of the exam review period and should set out in detail the examination questions and answers which, in the opinion of the applicant, have been incorrectly graded. Supporting information may be filed to substantiate the applicant's claim.
- (c) Denial of Petition by Chair. The director of the specialization program shall review the petition and determine whether, if all grading objections of the petitioner are decided in the petitioner's favor, the petitioner's grade on the examination would be changed to a passing grade. If the director determines that the petitioner's grade would not be changed to passing, the director shall notify the chair who may deny the petition on this basis.
- (d) Review Procedure. The applicant's examination and petition shall be submitted to a panel consisting of three members of the specialty committee (the grade review panel). All identifying information shall be redacted from the examination and petition prior to submission to the grade review panel. The grade review panel shall review the petition of the applicant and determine whether the grade of the examination should be changed. The grade review panel shall make a written report to the board setting forth its recommendation relative to the grade on the applicant's examination and an explanation of its recommendation.
- (e) Decision of the Board. The board shall consider the petition and the report of the grade review panel and shall certify the applicant if it determines by majority vote that the applicant has satisfied all of the standards for certification.
- (f) Failure of Examination Prepared and Administered by a Testing Organization on Behalf of the Board. Notwithstanding paragraphs (a) – (d) of this rule, if the board is utilizing a qualified organization to prepare and administer the certification examination for a specialty pursuant to Rule .1716(10) of this subchapter, an applicant for such specialty shall only be entitled to the review and appeal procedures of the organization.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 11, 2010;
Amended Eff. September 24, 2015; March 6, 2014.

27 NCAC 01D .1804 APPEAL TO THE COUNCIL

- (a) **Appealable Decisions.** An appeal may be taken to the council from a decision of the board which denies an applicant certification (i.e., when an applicant's application has been rejected because it is not in compliance with the standards for certification or when an applicant fails the written specialty examination), denies an applicant continued certification as a specialist, or suspends or revokes a specialist's certification. The rejection of an application because it is incomplete shall not be appealable.
- (b) **Filing the Appeal.** An appeal from a decision of the board as described in Paragraph (a) may be taken by filing with the executive director of the North Carolina State Bar (the State Bar) a written notice of appeal not later than 21 days after the date of the notice of the board's decision to the applicant who is denied certification or continued certification or to a lawyer whose certification is suspended or revoked.
- (c) **Appeal Procedure.** The appeal to the council shall be under such rules and regulations as the council may prescribe.
- (d) **Scope of Review.** Review by the council shall be limited to whether the applicant was provided with procedural rights and whether the board, or the reconsideration panel where applicable, applied the correct procedural standards and State Bar rules in rendering its decision. The applicant shall have the burden of making a clear and convincing showing of arbitrary, capricious, or fraudulent denial of procedural rights or misapplication of the procedural standards or State Bar rules.
- (e) **Notice of the Council's Decision.** The applicant shall receive written notice of the council's decision.
- (f) **Costs.** The council may tax the costs attributable to the proceeding against the applicant.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 22, 2016; March 11, 2010.

27 NCAC 01D .1805 JUDICIAL REVIEW

- (a) **Appeals -** The appellant or the board may appeal from an adverse ruling by the council.
- (b) **Wake County Superior Court -** All appeals from the council shall lie to the Wake County Superior Court. [See N.C. State Bar v. Du Mont, 304 N.C. 627, 286 S.E.2d 89 (1982).]
- (c) **Judicial Review Procedures -** Article 4 of G.S. 150B shall be complied with by all parties relative to the procedures for judicial review of the council's decision.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1806 ADDITIONAL RULES PERTAINING TO HEARING AND APPEALS

- (a) **Notices.** Every notice required by these rules shall be deemed sufficient if sent to the applicant at the address listed on the applicant's last application to the board or the address in the official membership records of the State Bar.
- (b) **Expenses Related to Hearings and Appeals.** In its discretion, the board may direct that the necessary expenses incurred in any investigation, processing, and hearing of any matter to the board or appeal to the council be paid by the board or appeal to the council be paid by the board. However, all expenses related to travel to any hearing or appeal for the applicant, his or her attorney, and witnesses called by the applicant shall be paid by the applicant.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 11, 2010.

SECTION .1900 - RULES CONCERNING THE ACCREDITATION OF CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE BOARD OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

27 NCAC 01D .1901 GENERAL PROVISIONS

- (a) An applicant for certification in a specialty field must make a satisfactory showing of the requisite number of hours of continuing legal education (CLE) in the specialty field for each of the last three years prior to application in accord with the

standards adopted by the board in the field. In no event will the number of hours be less than an average of 12 hours per year. The average number of hours is computed by adding all hours of continuing legal education credits in the field for three years and dividing by three.

(b) An applicant for continued certification must make a satisfactory showing of the requisite number of hours of continuing legal education (CLE) in the specialty field for each of the five years of certification in accord with the standards adopted by the board in the field. In no event will the number of hours be less than an average of 12 hours per year. The average number of hours is computed by adding all hours of continuing legal education credits in the field for the five years and dividing by five.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1902 DEFINITIONS

(a) Applicant - The person applying for certification or continued certification of specialization.

(b) Board - The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization.

(c) Committee - The specialty committee appointed by the board in the applicant's specialty field.

(d) Sponsor - An organization offering continuing legal education courses for attendance by attorneys.

(e) Accredited Sponsor - A sponsor which has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the board that the continuing legal education programs offered by it meet the accreditation standards on a continuing basis warranting a presumption of accreditation.

(f) Accreditation - A determination by the board that the continuing legal education activities further the professional competence of the applicant and a certain number of hours of continuing legal education credit should be awarded for participation in the continuing legal education activity.

(g) Continuing Legal Education (CLE) - Attendance at lecture-type instruction meeting the standards in Rule .1903 of this Section or participation in alternative activities described in Rule .1905 of this Section.

(h) Specialty Field - An area of the law as defined by the board in which the board certifies specialists.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1903 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR LECTURE-TYPE CLE ACTIVITIES

(a) The CLE activity shall have significant intellectual or practical content and the primary objective shall be to increase the participant's professional competence in the applicant's specialty field.

(b) The CLE activity shall constitute an organized program of learning dealing with matters directly related to the practice of law, professional responsibility, or ethical obligations of lawyers in the applicant's specialty field.

(c) The CLE activity may be live; prerecorded in audio or video format; simultaneously broadcast by telephone, satellite, live web streaming (webcasting), or video conferencing; or online. A prerecorded audio or video CLE activity must comply with the minimum registration and verification of attendance requirements in Rule .1604(d) of this chapter.

(d) Continuing legal education materials are to be prepared and activities conducted by an individual or group qualified by practical or academic experience in a setting suitable to the educational activity of the program.

(e) Except when not suitable or readily available because of the topic or the nature of the lecture, thorough, high quality, and carefully prepared written materials shall be provided to all attendees prior to or at the time the instruction is presented. Absence of materials should be the exception and not the rule.

History Note Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. September 24, 2015.

27 NCAC 01D .1904 COMPUTATION OF HOURS OF INSTRUCTION

(a) Hours of CLE will be computed by adding the number of minutes of actual instruction, dividing by 60 and rounding the results to the nearest one-tenth of an hour.

(b) Only actual instruction will be included in computing the total hours of actual instruction. The following will be excluded:

- (1) introductory remarks;
- (2) breaks;

- (3) business meetings;
- (4) keynote speeches or speeches in connection with meals;
- (5) question and answer sessions in excess of 15 minutes per hour of instruction;
- (6) programs of less than 60 minutes in length.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1905 ALTERNATIVES TO LECTURE-TYPE CLE COURSE INSTRUCTION

(a) Teaching - Preparation and presentation of written materials at an accredited CLE course will qualify for CLE credit at the rate of six hours of credit for each hour of presentation as computed under Rule .1904 of this Subchapter. In the case of joint preparation and/or presentation, each preparer and presenter will receive a proportionate share of the total credit available. Repeat presentations of substantially the same materials will qualify for one-half the credit available for the initial presentation. Instruction at an academic institution will qualify for three hours of CLE credit per semester hour taught in the specialty field.

(b) Publication - Publication of a scholarly article in the applicant's specialty field will qualify for CLE credit in the discretion of the specialty committee, subject to board approval, based on a review of the article, its content, and its quality. No more than ten hours of credit will be given for a single article.

(c) Self-study - An individual may review video or audio tapes or manuscripts of lectures from qualified CLE courses, which lectures would meet the accreditation standards in Rule .1903 of this Subchapter and receive credit according to the computation of hours in Rule .1904 of this Subchapter provided that no more than two hours per year of self-study shall qualify to meet the CLE requirements for certification or recertification.

(d) Advanced degrees - Attendance at courses of instruction at a law school which can be credited toward the earning of an advanced degree in the specialty field of the applicant will qualify for one hour of CLE credit per semester hour taken if attained in the required period prior to application for certification or recertification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 5, 2009; March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01D .1906 ACCREDITATION OF COURSES

(a) All courses offered by an accredited sponsor which relate to the specialty field as defined by the board shall be accredited and credit for attendance shall be given for the hours of instruction related to the specialty field of the applicant as determined by the board.

(b) The applicant shall make a showing that any course for which the applicant desires CLE credit offered by a sponsor not on the accredited sponsor list meets the accreditation standards of Rule .1903 of this Section. The board will then determine the number of hours of credit based upon the standards of Rule .1904 of this Section.

(c) An accredited sponsor may not represent or advertise that a CLE course is approved or that the attendees will be given CLE credit by the board unless such sponsor provides a brochure or other appropriate information describing the topics, hours of instruction, and instructors for its CLE offerings in a specialty field at least 30 days in advance of the date of the course.

(d) An unaccredited sponsor desiring advance accreditation of a course and the right to designate its accreditation for the appropriate number of CLE credits in its solicitations shall submit a brochure or other appropriate information describing the topics, hours of instruction, location, and instructors for its CLE offerings at least 60 days prior to the date of the course.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. October 1, 2003.

27 NCAC 01D .1907 ACCREDITATION OF SPONSOR

(a) The following is the list of accredited sponsors:

- (1) North Carolina Bar Foundation;
- (2) North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers;
- (3) Wake Forest University Continuing Legal Education;
- (4) University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Continuing Legal Education;
- (5) Duke University School of Law Continuing Legal Education;

- (6) Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law Continuing Legal Education;
- (7) Middle District Bankruptcy Seminar;
- (8) UCB Estate Planning and Taxation Seminar;
- (9) any member of the Association of Continuing Legal Education Administrators;
- (10) University of Miami School of Law;
- (11) any of the following groups: American Bar Association, American College of Probate Counsel, American College of Trial Counsel, American patent Law Association, Association of American Law Schools, Association of Life Insurance Counsel, Conference of Chief Justices, Council on Legal Education for Professional Responsibility, Inc., Federal Bar Association, Federal Communications Bar Association, Judge Advocates Association, Maritime Law Association of the United States, National Association of Attorneys General, National Association of Bar Executives, National Association of Bar Presidents, National Association of Bar Counsel, National Association of Women Lawyers, National Bar Association, National Conference of Bar Examiners, National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, National Conference of Judicial Councils, National District Attorneys Association, and National Legal Aid and Defender Association.

(b) Any sponsor not listed in Paragraph (a) of this Rule desiring to attain accredited sponsor status must submit to the board a description of the courses offered for the two years prior to application to the board for accredited sponsor status. The board may request copies of any course materials used in any of the offered courses. If, in the judgment of the board, the sponsor has met the accreditation standards of Rule .1903 of this Section for each of the courses offered, the board will designate the sponsor as an accredited sponsor.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .1908 SHOWING BY APPLICANTS

Every applicant will list each type of CLE activity under each of the following categories:

- (1) attendance at CLE instruction offered by an accredited sponsor. The course name, sponsor, and number of hours of CLE shall be listed by the applicant;
- (2) attendance at CLE instruction offered by a sponsor not on the accredited sponsor list or not given advanced approval by the board under Rule .1906 of this Section. A fee of five dollars (\$5.00) per course will be charged for accrediting each course listed by the applicant offered by a sponsor not on the accredited sponsor list or not given advanced approval under Rule .1906(d) of this Section. The course name, sponsor, and number of hours of CLE shall be listed by the applicant;
- (3) participation as an instructor at a CLE course. The course name, sponsor, and number of hours of instruction or preparation shall be stated by the applicant;
- (4) publication of a scholarly article. A copy of the publication shall accompany the application;
- (5) self-study. A description of the materials used, the dates of use, the number of hours claimed, and the source from which they were obtained shall accompany the application.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

SECTION .2000 - RULES OF THE BOARD OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION FOR APPROVAL OF INDEPENDENT CERTIFYING ORGANIZATIONS

27 NCAC 01D .2001 POLICY STATEMENT

These guidelines for reviewing independent organizations which certify lawyers as specialists are designed to thoroughly evaluate the purpose and function of such certifying organizations and the procedures they use in their certification processes. These guidelines are not meant to be exclusive, but to provide a framework in which certifying organizations can be evaluated. The aim of this evaluation is to provide consumers of legal services a means of access to lawyers who are qualified in particular fields of law.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2002 GENERAL PROCEDURE

As contemplated in Rule 2.5 of the North Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct, the North Carolina State Bar, through its Board of Legal Specialization (the board), shall, upon the filing of a completed application and the payment of any required fee, review the standards and procedures of any organization which certifies lawyers as specialists and desires the approval of the North Carolina State Bar. The board shall prepare an application form to be used by certifying organizations and shall administer the application process.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .2003 FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED IN REVIEWING CERTIFYING ORGANIZATIONS

(a) Purpose of the Organization - The stated purposes for the original formation of the organization and any subsequent changes in those purposes shall be examined to determine whether the organization is dedicated to the maintenance of professional competence.

(b) Background of the Organization - The length of time the organization has been in existence, whether the organization is a successor of another, the requirements for membership in the organization, the number of members which the organization has, the business structure under which the organization operates, and the professional qualifications of the individuals who direct the policies and operations of the organization shall be examined to determine whether the organization is a bona fide certifying organization.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .2004 STANDARDS FOR APPROVAL OF CERTIFYING ORGANIZATIONS

The following standards are to be considered by the board in evaluating an application for approval of a certifying organization.

- (1) Uniform Applicability of Certification Standards - In general, the standards for certification in any specialty field must be understandable and easily applied to individual applicants. Certification by the organization must be available to any attorney who meets the standards, and the organization must not certify an attorney who has not demonstrably met each standard. The organization must agree to promptly inform the board of any material changes in its standards, definitions of specialty fields or certifying procedures and must further agree to respond promptly to any reasonable requests for information from the board.
- (2) Definitions of Specialty Fields - Every field of law in which certification is offered must be susceptible of meaningful definition and be an area in which North Carolina lawyers regularly practice.
- (3) Decision Making by Recognized Experts - The persons in a certifying organization making decisions regarding applicants shall include lawyers who, in the judgment of the board, are experts in the subject areas of practice and who each have extensive practice or involvement in those areas of practice.
- (4) Certification Standards - A certifying organization's standards for certification of specialists must include, as a minimum, the standards required for certification set out in the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (Section .1700 of this subchapter) and in the rules, regulations and standards adopted by the board from time to time. Such standards shall not unlawfully discriminate against any lawyer properly qualified for certification as a specialist, but shall provide a reasonable basis for a determination that an applicant possesses special competence in a particular field of law, as demonstrated by the following means:
 - (a) Substantial Involvement - Substantial involvement in the area of specialty during the five-year period immediately preceding application to the certifying agency. Substantial involvement is generally measured by the amount of time spent practicing in the area of specialty. In no event may the time spent in practicing the specialty be less than 25 percent of the total practice of a lawyer engaged in a normal full-time practice;
 - (b) Peer Review - Peer recommendations from attorneys or judges who are familiar with the competence of the applicant in the area of specialty, none of whom are related to, engaged in legal practice with, or involved in continuing commercial relationships with the lawyer;
 - (c) Written Examination - Objective evaluation of the applicant's knowledge of the substantive and procedural law in the area of specialty as determined by written examination;

- (d) Continuing Legal Education - At least 36 hours of approved continuing legal education credit in the area of specialty during the three years immediately preceding application to the certifying organization.
- (5) Applications and Procedures - Application forms used by the certifying organization must be submitted to the board for review to determine that the requirements specified above are being met by applicants. Additionally, the certifying organization must submit a description of the process it uses to review applications.
- (6) Requirements for Recertification - The standards used by a certifying organization must provide for certification for a limited period of time, which shall not exceed five years, after which time persons who have been certified must apply for recertification. Requirements for recertification must include continued substantial involvement in the area of specialty, continuing legal education, and appropriate peer review.
- (7) Revocation of Certification - The standards used by a certifying organization shall include a procedure for revocation of certification. A certification shall be revoked upon a finding that the certificate holder has been disbarred or suspended from the practice of law. The standards shall require a certificate holder to report his or her disbarment or suspension from the practice of law to the certifying organization.
- (8) Waiver - The standards used by a certifying organization may provide for waiver of the peer review and written examination requirements set forth in Rules .2004(4)(b) and (c) above for an applicant who was responsible for formulating and grading the organization's initial written examination in his or her area of specialty.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2005 APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- (a) The organization may file an application seeking approval of the organization by the board. Applications shall be on forms available from and approved by the board. The application fee shall be one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00).
- (b) The organization which has been approved shall provide its standards, definitions and/or certifying procedures to the board in January of each year and must pay an annual administrative fee of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) to maintain its approved status.
- (c) When the board determines that an approved certifying organization has ceased to exist, has ceased to operate its certification program in the manner described in its application, or has failed to comply with the requirements of Rule .2005(b) above, its approved status shall be revoked. After such a revocation, no North Carolina lawyer may publicize a certification from the organization in question.
- (d) The appeal procedures of the board shall apply to any application by an organization for approval as a certifying organization and any decision to revoke a certifying organization's approved status.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2006 EFFECT OF APPROVAL OF A CERTIFYING ORGANIZATION BY THE BOARD OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

When an organization is approved as a certifying organization by the board, any North Carolina lawyer certified as a specialist by that organization may publicize that certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

SECTION .2100 - CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE REAL PROPERTY LAW SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .2101 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates real property law, including the subspecialties of real property-residential transactions and real property-business, commercial, and industrial transactions as a field of law for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2102 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of real property law is the practice of law dealing with real property transactions, including title examination, property transfers, financing, leases, and determination of property rights. Subspecialties in the field are identified and defined as follows:

- (1) Real Property Law-Residential Transactions - The practice of law dealing with the acquisition, ownership, leasing, financing, use, transfer and disposition, of residential real property by individuals;
- (2) Real Property Law-Business, Commercial, and Industrial Transactions - The practice of law dealing with the acquisition, ownership, leasing, management, financing, development, use, transfer, and disposition of residential, business, commercial, and industrial real property.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2103 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN REAL PROPERTY LAW

A lawyer may qualify as a specialist by meeting the standards set for one or both of the subspecialties. If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in real property law by meeting the standards set for the real property law-residential transactions subspecialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Real Property Law-Residential Transactions." If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in real property law by meeting the standards set for the real property law-business, commercial, and industrial transactions, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Real Property Law-Business, Commercial, and Industrial Transactions." If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in real property law by meeting the standards set for both the real property law-residential transactions subspecialty and the real property law-business, commercial, and industrial transactions subspecialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Real Property Law-Residential, Business, Commercial and Industrial Transactions."

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2104 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in real property law shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2105 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN REAL PROPERTY LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in real property law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification in real property law:

- (1) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.
- (2) Substantial Involvement - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in the practice of real property law.
 - (a) Substantial involvement shall mean during the five years preceding the application, the applicant has devoted an average of at least 500 hours a year to the practice of real property law, but not less than 400 hours in any one year.
 - (b) Practice shall mean substantive legal work done primarily for the purpose of legal advice or representation, or a practice equivalent.
 - (c) Practice equivalent means service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of real property law. Teaching may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement.

- (3) Continuing Legal Education - An applicant must have earned no less than 36 hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) credits in real property law during the three years preceding application with not less than 6 credits in any one year. Of the 36 hours of CLE, at least 30 hours shall be in real property law and the balance may be in the related areas of environmental law, taxation, business organizations, estate planning and probate law, and elder law.
- (4) Peer review - An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of ten lawyers or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice in North Carolina. An applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.
 - (a) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a partner or associate of the applicant at the time of the application.
 - (b) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board with the application for certification in the specialty field. These forms shall be returned directly to the specialty committee.
- (5) Examinations - The applicant must pass a written examination designed to test the applicant's knowledge and ability in real property law.
 - (a) Terms - The examination(s) shall be in written form and shall be given annually. The examination(s) shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.
 - (b) Subject Matter - The examination shall cover the applicant's knowledge in the following topics in real property law or in the subspecialty or subspecialties that the applicant has elected:
 - (i) title examinations, property transfers, financing, leases, and determination of property rights;
 - (ii) the acquisition, ownership, leasing, financing, use, transfer, and disposition of residential real property by individuals;
 - (iii) the acquisition, ownership, leasing, management, financing, development, use, transfer, and disposition of residential, business, commercial, and industrial real property.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amended Eff. October 9, 2008.

27 NCAC 01D .2106 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .2106(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

- (a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .2105(b) of this subchapter.
- (b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must have earned no less than 60 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in real property law as accredited by the board with not less than 6 credits earned in any one year. Of the 60 hours of CLE, at least 50 hours shall be in real property law and the balance may be in the related areas of environmental law, taxation, business organizations, estate planning and probate law, and elder law.
- (c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state and familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .2105(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.
- (d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than one hundred eighty (180) days nor less than ninety days prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.

(e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .2105 of this subchapter, including the examination.

(f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, then the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .2105 of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: October 9, 2008; March 27, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .2107 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in real property law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

SECTION .2200 - CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE BANKRUPTCY LAW SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .2201 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates bankruptcy law, including the subspecialties of consumer bankruptcy law and business bankruptcy law, as a field of law for which certification of specialists under the Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2202 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of bankruptcy law is the practice of law dealing with all laws and procedures involving the rights, obligations, and remedies between debtors and creditors in potential or pending federal bankruptcy cases and state insolvency actions. Subspecialties in the field are identified and defined as follows:

- (1) Consumer Bankruptcy Law - The practice of law dealing with consumer bankruptcy and the representation of interested parties in contested matters or adversary proceedings in individual filings of Chapter 7, Chapter 12, or Chapter 13;
- (2) Business Bankruptcy Law - The practice of law dealing with business bankruptcy and the representation of interested parties in contested matters or adversary proceedings in bankruptcy cases filed on behalf of debtors who are or have been engaged in business prior to an entity filing Chapter 7, Chapter 9, Chapter 11, or Chapter 12.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2203 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN BANKRUPTCY LAW

A lawyer may qualify as a specialist by meeting the standards set for one or both of the subspecialties. If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in bankruptcy law by meeting the standards set for the consumer bankruptcy law subspecialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Consumer Bankruptcy Law." If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in bankruptcy law by meeting the standards set for the business bankruptcy law subspecialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Business Bankruptcy Law." If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in bankruptcy law by meeting the standards set for both the consumer bankruptcy law and the business bankruptcy law subspecialties, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Business and Consumer Bankruptcy Law."

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2204 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in bankruptcy law shall be governed by the provisions of the Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 84-23;*
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2205 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN BANKRUPTCY LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in bankruptcy law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification as a specialist in bankruptcy law:

- (1) **Licensure and Practice** - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.
- (2) **Substantial Involvement** - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in the practice of bankruptcy law.
 - (a) Substantial involvement shall mean during the five years preceding the application, the applicant has devoted an average of at least 500 hours a year to the practice of bankruptcy law, but not less than 400 hours in any one year.
 - (b) Practice shall mean substantive legal work done primarily for the purpose of legal advice or representation, or a practice equivalent.
 - (c) Practice equivalent shall mean, after admission to the bar of any state, District of Columbia, or a U.S. territorial possession
 - (i) service as a judge of any bankruptcy court, service as a clerk of any bankruptcy court, or service as a standing trustee;
 - (ii) corporate or government service, including military service, after admission to the bar of any state, the District of Columbia, or any U.S. territorial possession, but only if the bankruptcy work done was legal advice or representation of the corporation, governmental unit, or individuals connected therewith;
 - (iii) service as a deputy or assistant clerk of any bankruptcy court, as a research assistant to a bankruptcy judge, or as a law professor teaching bankruptcy and/or debtor-creditor related courses may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement.
- (3) **Continuing Legal Education** - An applicant must have earned no less than 36 hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) credits in bankruptcy law, during the three years preceding application with not less than 6 credits in any one year.
- (4) **Peer Review** - An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of ten lawyers or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice in North Carolina. An applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.
 - (a) A reference may not be a judge of any bankruptcy court.
 - (b) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a partner or associate of the applicant at the time of the application.
 - (c) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board with the application for certification in the specialty field. These forms shall be returned directly to the specialty committee.
- (5) **Examination** - The applicant must pass a written examination designed to test the applicant's knowledge and ability in bankruptcy law.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 84-23;*

Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. November 16, 2006.

27 NCAC 01D .2206 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .2206(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

- (a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .2205(b) of this subchapter.
- (b) Continuing Legal Education - Since last certified, a specialist must have earned no less than 60 hours of accredited continued legal education credits in bankruptcy law with not less than 6 credits earned in any one year.
- (c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state and familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .2205(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.
- (d) Application for continued certification shall be made not more than 180 days nor less than 90 days prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.
- (e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .2205 of this subchapter, including the examination.
- (f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, then the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .2205 of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 27, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .2207 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in bankruptcy law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

SECTION .2300 - CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE ESTATE PLANNING AND PROBATE LAW SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .2301 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates estate planning and probate law as a field of law for which certification of specialists under the Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2302 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of estate planning and probate law is the practice of law dealing with planning for conservation and disposition of estates, including consideration of federal and state tax consequences; preparation of legal instruments to effectuate estate plans; and probate of wills and administration of estates, including federal and state tax matters.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2303 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN ESTATE PLANNING AND PROBATE LAW

If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in estate planning and probate law by meeting the standards set for the specialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Estate Planning and Probate Law."

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .2304 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in estate planning and probate law shall be governed by the provisions of the Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .2305 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN ESTATE PLANNING AND PROBATE LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in estate planning and probate law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification as a specialist in estate planning and probate law:

(a) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.

(b) Substantial Involvement - The applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in the practice of estate planning and probate law.

(1) Substantial involvement shall be measured as follows:

(A) Time Spent - During the five years preceding the application, the applicant has devoted an average of at least 500 hours a year to the practice of estate planning and probate law, but not less than 400 hours in any one year;

(B) Experience Gained - During the five years immediately preceding application, the applicant shall have had continuing involvement in a substantial portion of the activities described in each of the following paragraphs:

(i) counseled persons in estate planning, including giving advice with respect to gifts, life insurance, wills, trusts, business arrangements and agreements, and other estate planning matters;

(ii) prepared or supervised the preparation of (1) estate planning instruments, such as simple and complex wills (including provisions for testamentary trusts, marital deductions and elections), revocable and irrevocable inter vivos trusts (including short-term and minor's trusts), business planning agreements (including buy-sell agreements and employment contracts), powers of attorney and other estate planning instruments; and (2) federal and state gift tax returns, including representation before the Internal Revenue Service and the North Carolina Department of Revenue in connection with gift tax returns;

(iii) handled or advised with respect to the probate of wills and the administration of decedents' estates, including representation of the personal representative before the clerk of superior court, guardianship, will contest, and declaratory judgment actions;

(iv) prepared, reviewed or supervised the preparation of federal estate tax returns, North Carolina inheritance tax returns, and federal and state fiduciary income tax returns, including representation before the Internal Revenue Service and the North Carolina Department of Revenue in connection with such tax returns and related controversies.

(2) Practice shall mean substantive legal work done primarily for the purpose of legal advice or representation, or a practice equivalent.

(3) Practice equivalent shall mean

(A) receipt of an LL.M. degree in taxation or estate planning and probate law (or such other related fields approved by the specialty committee and the board from an approved law school) may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement;

- (B) service as a trust officer with a corporate fiduciary having duties primarily in the area of estate and trust administration, may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement;
- (C) service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of taxation or estate planning and probate law (or such other related fields approved by the specialty committee and the board). Such service may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement.

(c) Continuing Legal Education - An applicant must have earned no less than 72 hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) credits in estate planning and probate law during the three years preceding application. Of the 72 hours of CLE, at least 45 hours shall be in estate planning and probate law (provided, however, that eight of the 45 hours may be in the related areas of elder law, Medicaid planning, and guardianship), and the balance may be in designated related fields. A list of the topics that qualify as related-field CLE shall be maintained by the board on its official website.

(d) Peer Review - An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of ten lawyers or judges, all of whom are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice in North Carolina. An applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.

- (1) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a partner or associate of the applicant at the time of the application.
- (2) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board with the application for certification in the specialty field. These forms shall be returned directly to the specialty committee.

(e) Examination - The applicant must pass a written examination designed to test the applicant's knowledge and ability in estate planning and probate law.

- (1) Terms - The examination shall be in written form and shall be given annually. The examination shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.
- (2) Subject Matter - The examination shall cover test the applicant's knowledge and application of the law of estate planning and probate. A list of the topics covered on the exam shall be maintained by the board on its official website.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. June 9, 2016; October 9, 2008.*

27 NCAC 01D .2306 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .2306(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

(a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .2305(b) of this subchapter; however, for the purpose of continued certification as a specialist, service outside private practice, during which the specialist had duties primarily in the areas of estate planning, estate administration, and/or trust administration, may be substituted for the equivalent years of experience toward the five-year requirement, as determined by the board in its discretion.

(b) Continuing Legal Education - Since last certified, a specialist must have earned no less than 120 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in estate planning and probate law. Of the 120 hours of CLE at least 75 hours shall be in estate planning and probate law (provided, however, that 15 of the 75 hours may be in the related areas of elder law, Medicaid planning, and guardianship), and the balance may be in the related areas of taxation, business organizations, real property, family law, elder law, Medicaid planning, and guardianship.

(c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state and familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .2305(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.

(d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than 180 days nor less than 90 days prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.

(e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .2305 of this subchapter, including the examination.

(f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, then the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .2305 of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: October 9, 2008; April 5, 2018; March 27, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .2307 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in estate planning and probate law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

SECTION .2400 - CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE FAMILY LAW SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .2401 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates family law as a field of law for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2402 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of family law is the practice of law relating to marriage, divorce, alimony, child custody and support, equitable distribution, enforcement of support, domestic violence, bastardy, and adoption.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2403 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN FAMILY LAW

If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in family law by meeting the standards set for the specialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Family Law."

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2404 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in family law shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01D .2405 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN FAMILY LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in family law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this Subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification as a specialist in family law:

- (1) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.
- (2) Substantial Involvement - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in the practice of family law.
 - (a) Substantial involvement shall mean during the five years preceding the application, the applicant has devoted an average of at least 600 hours a year to the practice of family law, and not less than 400 hours during any one year.
 - (b) Practice shall mean substantive legal work done primarily for the purpose of legal advice or representation, or a practice equivalent.
 - (c) Practice equivalent shall mean
 - (i) service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of family law. Such service may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement.
 - (ii) service as a district court judge in North Carolina, hearing a substantial number of family law cases. Such service may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement.
- (3) Continuing Legal Education - During the three calendar years prior to the year of application and the portion of the calendar year immediately prior to application, an applicant must have earned no less than 45 hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) credits in family law, nine of which may be in related fields. Related fields shall include taxation, trial advocacy, evidence, negotiation (including training in mediation, arbitration and collaborative law), juvenile law, real property, estate planning and probate law, business organizations, employee benefits, bankruptcy, elder law, and immigration law. Only nine hours of CLE credit will be recognized for attendance at an extended negotiation or mediation training course. Parenting coordinator training will not qualify for family law or related field hours. At least nine hours of CLE in family law or related fields must be taken during each of the three calendar years preceding application.
- (4) Peer Review - An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of ten lawyers or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice in North Carolina. An applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.
 - (a) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a partner or associate of the applicant at the time of the application.
 - (b) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board with the application for certification in the specialty field. These forms shall be returned directly to the specialty committee.
- (5) Examination - The applicant must pass a written examination designed to test the applicant's knowledge and ability in family law.
 - (a) Terms - The examination shall be in written form and shall be given annually. The examination shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.
 - (b) Subject Matter - The examination shall cover the applicant's knowledge and application of the law relating to marriage, divorce, alimony, child custody and support, equitable distribution, enforcement of support, domestic violence, bastardy, and adoption including, but not limited to, the following:
 - (i) contempt (Chapter 05A of the North Carolina General Statutes);
 - (ii) adoptions (Chapter 48);
 - (iii) bastardy (Chapter 49);
 - (iv) divorce and alimony (Chapter 50);
 - (v) Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (Chapter 50A);
 - (vi) domestic violence (Chapter 50B);
 - (vii) marriage (Chapter 51);
 - (viii) powers and liabilities of married persons (Chapter 52);
 - (ix) Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (Chapter 52C);

- (x) Uniform Premarital Agreement Act (Chapter 52B);
- (xi) termination of parental rights, as relating to adoption and termination for failure to provide support (Chapter 07B, Article 11);
- (xii) garnishment and enforcement of child support obligations (Chapter 110, Article 9);
- (xiii) Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act (28 U.S.C. 1738A);
- (xiv) Internal Revenue Code 71 (Alimony), 215 (Alimony Deduction), 121 (Exclusion of Gain from the Sale of Principal Residence), 151 and 152 (Dependency Exemptions), 1041 (Transfer of Property Incidental to Divorce), 2043 and 2516 (Gift Tax Exception), 414(p) (Defining QDRO Requirements), 408 (d)(6) (IRA Transfer Requirements for Non-Taxable Event), and regulations interpretive of these Code sections; and
- (xv) Federal Wiretap Law.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amended Eff. October 9, 2008; February 27, 2003; February 5, 2002.

27 NCAC 01D .2406 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .2406(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

- (a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .2405(b) of this subchapter; however, for the purpose of continued certification, service as a district court judge in North Carolina hearing a substantial number of family law cases may be substituted, year for year, for the experience required to meet the five-year requirement.
- (b) Continuing Legal Education - Since last certified, a specialist must have earned no less than 60 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in family law or related fields. Not less than nine credits may be earned in any one year, and no more than twelve credits may be in related fields. Related fields shall include taxation, trial advocacy, evidence, negotiations (including training in mediation, arbitration, and collaborative law), juvenile law, real property, estate planning and probate law, business organizations, employee benefits, bankruptcy, elder law, and immigration law. Only nine hours of CLE credit will be recognized for attendance at an extended negotiation or mediation training course. Parenting coordinator training will not qualify for family law or related field hours.
- (c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state and familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .2405(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.
- (d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than 180 days nor less than 90 days prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.
- (e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .2405 of this subchapter, including the examination.
- (f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, then the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .2405 of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Effective December 8, 1994;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 27, 2003; October 9, 2008; September 22, 2016;
 March 27, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .2407 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in family law are subject to any general requirement, standards, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

SECTION .2500 - CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE CRIMINAL LAW SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .2501 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates criminal law, including the subspecialties of state criminal law, juvenile delinquency law, and federal criminal law, as a field of law for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this Subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 10, 2011; August 25, 2011;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 15, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .2502 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of criminal law is the practice of law dealing with the defense or prosecution of those charged with criminal offenses in state or federal courts. The subspecialties in the field are identified and defined as follows:

- (a) State Criminal Law. The practice of criminal law in state trial and appellate courts. The standards for the subspecialty are set forth in Rules .2505-.2506.
- (b) Juvenile Delinquency Law. The practice of law in state juvenile delinquency courts. The standards for the subspecialty are set forth in Rules .2508-.2509.
- (c) Federal Criminal Law. The practice of criminal law in federal trial and appellate courts. The standards for the subspecialty are set forth in Rules .2510-.2511.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 10, 2011; August 25, 2011;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 15, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .2503 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN CRIMINAL LAW

A lawyer may qualify as a specialist by meeting the standards for any of the subspecialties of state criminal law, juvenile delinquency law, or federal criminal law. If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist by meeting the standards set for the subspecialty of state criminal law, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in State Criminal Law." If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist by meeting the standards for the subspecialty of juvenile delinquency law, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Criminal Law – Juvenile Delinquency." If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist by meeting the standards set for the subspecialty of federal criminal law, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Federal Criminal Law." Effective June 15, 2022, any lawyer previously certified as a specialist in the state/federal criminal law specialty may continue to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in State/Federal Criminal Law" until the specialist's next recertification period, at which point he or she must satisfy the requirements for continued certification as a specialist in state criminal law, federal criminal law, or both.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
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Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 15, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .2504 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in criminal law shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01D .2505 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN STATE CRIMINAL LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in state criminal law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification:

(a) **Licensure and Practice** - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of the application. During the period of certification an applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina.

(b) **Substantial Involvement** - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in the practice of state criminal law.

(1) Substantial involvement shall mean during the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 500 hours a year to the practice of state criminal law, but not less than 400 hours in any one year. "Practice" shall mean substantive legal work, specifically including representation in criminal jury trials, done primarily for the purpose of providing legal advice or representation, or a practice equivalent.

(2) "Practice equivalent" shall mean:

(A) Service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of criminal law for one year or more, which may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .2505(b)(1) above;

(B) Service as a state or tribal court judge for one year or more, which may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .2505(b)(1) above;

(3) For the subspecialty of state criminal law, the board shall require an applicant to show substantial involvement by providing information that demonstrates the applicant's significant criminal trial experience such as:

(A) representation during the applicant's entire legal career in criminal trials concluded by jury verdict;

(B) representation as principal counsel of record in federal felony cases or state felony cases (Class G or higher);

(C) court appearances in other substantive criminal proceedings in criminal courts of any jurisdiction; and

(D) representation in appeals of decisions to the North Carolina Court of Appeals, the North Carolina Supreme Court, or any federal appellate court.

(c) **Continuing Legal Education** - In the state criminal law subspecialty, an applicant must have earned no less than 40 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in criminal law during the three years preceding the application, which must include the following:

(1) at least 34 hours in skills pertaining to criminal law, such as evidence, substantive criminal law, criminal procedure, criminal trial advocacy and criminal trial tactics; and

(2) at least six hours in the area of ethics .

(d) **Peer Review** -

(1) Each applicant for certification as a specialist in the subspecialty of state criminal law must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review.

(2) All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice in North Carolina and must be familiar with the competence and qualifications of the applicant in the specialty field. The applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualifications.

(3) Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. The board or the specialty committee may contact in person or by telephone any reference listed by an applicant.

(4) Each applicant must provide for reference and independent inquiry the names and addresses of the following: (i) ten lawyers and/or judges who practice in the field of criminal law and who are familiar with

- the applicant's practice, and (ii) opposing counsel and the judge in eight recent cases tried by the applicant to verdict or entry of order.
- (5) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant, may not be a partner or associate of the applicant, and may not work in the same government office as the applicant at the time of the application.
- (e) Examination - The applicant must pass a written examination designed to test the applicant's knowledge and ability.
- (1) Terms - The examination shall be in written form and shall be given at such times as the board deems appropriate. The examination shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.
- (2) Subject Matter - The examination shall cover the applicant's knowledge in the following topics in state criminal law :
- (A) the North Carolina Rules of Evidence;
- (B) state criminal procedure and state laws affecting criminal procedure;
- (C) constitutional law;
- (D) appellate procedure and tactics;
- (E) trial procedure and trial tactics; and
- (F) criminal substantive law.
- (3) Required Examination Components -
An applicant for certification in the subspecialty of state criminal law must pass the examination on general topics in criminal law and the examination on state criminal law.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 5, 2004; October 6, 2004; August 23, 2007;
March 8, 2013; October 2, 2014; March 16, 2017;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 15, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .2506 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN STATE CRIMINAL LAW

The period of certification is five years. A certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .2506(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

- (a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that for the five years preceding reapplication he or she has had substantial involvement in the subspecialty as defined in Rule .2505(b).
- (b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must have earned no less than 60 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits as defined in Rule .2505(c)(1), with not less than 6 credits earned in any one year.
- (c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state and familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. Each applicant also must provide the names and addresses of the following: (i) five lawyers and/or judges who practice in the field of criminal law and who are familiar with the applicant's practice, and (ii) opposing counsel and the judge in four recent cases tried by the applicant to verdict or entry of order. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .2505(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.
- (d) Time for Application - Application for continuing certification shall be made not more than 180 days nor less than 90 days prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.
- (e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .2505 of this subchapter, including the examination.
- (f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, then the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .2505 of this subchapter.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 5, 2004; October 6, 2004; March 27, 2019;*

Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 15, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .2507 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in the criminal law subspecialties of state criminal law, juvenile delinquency law, and federal criminal law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 10, 2011; August 25, 2011;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 15, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .2508 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in juvenile delinquency law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification:

(a) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of the application. During the period of certification an applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina.

(b) Substantial Involvement - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in the practice of juvenile delinquency law.

(1) Substantial involvement shall mean during the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 400 hours a year to the practice of juvenile delinquency law, but not less than 100 hours in any one year. "Practice" shall mean substantive legal work, specifically including representation of juveniles or the state in juvenile delinquency court, done primarily for the purpose of providing legal advice or representation, or a practice equivalent.

(2) "Practice equivalent" shall mean:

(A) Service for one year or more as a state district court judge responsible for presiding over juvenile delinquency court for 250 hours each year may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .2508(b)(1) above;

(B) Service on or participation in the activities of local, state, or national civic, professional or government organizations that promote juvenile justice may be used to meet the requirement set forth in Rule .2508(b)(1) but not to exceed 100 hours for any year during the five years.

(C) Service as a law professor in a juvenile delinquency legal clinic at an accredited law school may be used to meet the requirement set forth in Rule .2508(b)(1).

(D) The practice of state criminal law may be used to meet the requirement set forth in Rule .2508(b)(1) but not to exceed 100 hours for any year during the five years. "Practice of state criminal law" shall mean substantive legal work representing adults or the state in the state's criminal district and superior courts.

(3) An applicant shall also demonstrate substantial involvement during the five years prior to application unless otherwise noted by providing information that demonstrates the applicant's significant juvenile delinquency court experience such as:

(A) Representation of juveniles or the state during the applicant's entire legal career in juvenile delinquency hearings concluded by disposition;

(B) Representation of juveniles or the state in juvenile delinquency felony cases;

(C) Court appearances in other substantive juvenile delinquency proceedings in juvenile court;

(D) Representation of juveniles or the state through transfer to adult court; and

(E) Representation of juveniles or the state in appeals of juvenile delinquency decisions.

(c) Continuing Legal Education - An applicant must have earned no less than 40 hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) credits in criminal and juvenile delinquency law during the three years preceding application. Of the 40 hours of CLE, at least 12 hours shall be in juvenile delinquency law, and the balance may be in the following related fields: substantive criminal law, criminal procedure, trial advocacy, and evidence.

(d) Peer Review –

- (1) Each applicant for certification as a specialist in juvenile delinquency law must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review.
 - (2) All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice in North Carolina and must be familiar with the competence and qualifications of the applicant in the specialty field. The applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualifications.
 - (3) Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. The board or the specialty committee may contact in person or by telephone any reference listed by an applicant.
 - (4) Each applicant must provide for reference and independent inquiry the names and addresses of ten lawyers and/or judges who practice in the field of juvenile delinquency law or criminal law or preside over juvenile delinquency or criminal law proceedings and who are familiar with the applicant's practice.
 - (5) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant, may not be a partner or associate of the applicant, and may not work in the same government office as the applicant at the time of the application.
- (e) Examination - An applicant must pass a written examination designed to demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skills, and proficiency in the field of juvenile delinquency law to justify the representation of special competence to the legal profession and the public.
- (1) Terms - The examination shall be given annually in written form and shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.
 - (2) Subject Matter - The examination shall cover the applicant's knowledge in the following topics:
 - (A) North Carolina Rules of Evidence;
 - (B) State criminal substantive law;
 - (C) Constitutional law as it relates to criminal procedure and juvenile delinquency law;
 - (D) State criminal procedure;
 - (E) North Carolina Juvenile Code, Subchapters II and III, and related case law; and
 - (F) North Carolina case law as it relates to juvenile delinquency law
 - (3) Examination Components - An applicant for certification in the subspecialty of juvenile delinquency law must pass the criminal law examination on general topics in criminal law and the examination on juvenile delinquency law.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Approved by the Supreme Court August 25, 2011;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court March 5, 2015;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court June 15, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .2509 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY LAW

The period of certification is five years. A certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .2509(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

- (a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that for the five years preceding reapplication he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty or subspecialty as defined in Rule .2508(b).
- (b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must have earned no less than 65 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in criminal law and juvenile delinquency law with not less than six credits earned in any one year. Of the 65 hours, at least 20 hours shall be in juvenile delinquency law, and the balance may be in the following related fields: substantive criminal law, criminal procedure, trial advocacy, and evidence.
- (c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state, practice in the field of juvenile delinquency law or criminal law or preside over juvenile delinquency or criminal law proceedings, and are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. An applicant must receive a minimum of three favorable peer reviews to be considered by the board for compliance with this standard. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .2508(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.

(d) Time for Application - Application for continuing certification shall be made not more than 180 days nor less than 90 days prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.

(e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .2508 of this subchapter, including the examination.

(f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, then the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .2508 of this subchapter.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court August 25, 2011;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 27, 2019.*

27 NCAC 01D .2510 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN FEDERAL CRIMINAL LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in the subspecialty of federal criminal law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification:

(a) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of the application. During the period of certification an applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina.

(b) Substantial Involvement - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in the practice of criminal law in the federal courts of the United States.

(1) Substantial involvement shall mean during the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 600 hours a year to the practice of criminal law, but not less than 400 hours in any one year. "Practice" shall mean substantive legal work, specifically including the handling of matters in federal district court criminal cases, the pre-charge representation of clients in matters being investigated by federal law enforcement agencies, in federal criminal appeals, or otherwise providing legal advice or representation regarding such matters, or a practice equivalent.

(2) "Practice equivalent" shall mean:

(A) Service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of criminal law for one year or more, which may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .2510(b)(1) above;

(B) Service as an Article III or federal magistrate judge for one year or more, which may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .2510(b)(1) above;

(3) For the subspecialty of federal criminal law, the board shall require an applicant to show substantial involvement by providing information that demonstrates the applicant's significant federal criminal trial experience such as:

(A) representation during the applicant's entire legal career as principal counsel of record in federal criminal trials, whether concluded by jury verdict or not;

(B) court appearances in other substantive criminal proceedings in the U.S. District Courts of any jurisdiction;

(C) pre-charge representation in matters being investigated by federal law enforcement agencies; and

(D) representation as principal counsel of record in criminal appeals to any federal appellate court.

(c) Continuing Legal Education - In the federal criminal law subspecialty, an applicant must have earned no less than 40 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in criminal law during the three years preceding the application, which must include the following:

(1) at least 34 hours in skills pertaining to federal criminal law, such as evidence, substantive criminal law, federal criminal procedure, criminal trial tactics, pre-trial or pre-charge advocacy, criminal appeals (including any annual update pertaining to the docket of a federal appellate or the U.S. Supreme Court); and

(2) at least 6 hours in the area of ethics.

(d) Peer Review -

(1) Each applicant for certification as a specialist in the subspecialty of federal criminal law must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review.

- (2) All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice in North Carolina and must be familiar with the competence and qualifications of the applicant in the specialty field. The applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualifications.
 - (3) Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. The board or the specialty committee may contact in person or by telephone any reference listed by an applicant.
 - (4) Each applicant must provide for reference and independent inquiry the names and addresses of the following: (i) ten lawyers and/or judges who practice in the field of criminal law and who are familiar with the applicant's practice, and (ii) opposing counsel and the judge in eight recent cases tried by the applicant to verdict or entry of order.
 - (5) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant, may not be a partner or associate of the applicant, and may not work in the same government office as the applicant at the time of the application.
- (e) Examination - The applicant must pass a written examination designed to test the applicant's knowledge and ability.
- (1) Terms - The examination shall be in written form and shall be given at such times as the board deems appropriate. The examination shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.
 - (2) Subject Matter - The examination shall cover the applicant's knowledge in the following topics in federal criminal law:
 - (A) the Federal Rules of Evidence;
 - (B) federal criminal procedure and federal laws/federal case law affecting criminal procedure;
 - (C) federal constitutional law;
 - (D) the United States Sentencing Guidelines, and the calculation and application thereof;
 - (E) trial procedure and trial tactics;
 - (F) pre-charge advocacy and tactics;
 - (G) substantive federal criminal law; and
 - (H) federal appellate procedure and tactics.
 - (3) Required Examination Components - An applicant for certification in the subspecialty of federal criminal law must pass the examination on general topics in criminal law and the examination on federal criminal law.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

Approved by the Supreme Court June 15, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .2511 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A FEDERAL CRIMINAL LAW SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. A certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .2511(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

- (a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that for the five years preceding reapplication he or she has had substantial involvement in the subspecialty as defined in Rule .2510(b).
- (b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must have earned no less than 60 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits as described in .2510(c)(1), with not less than 6 credits earned in any one year.
- (c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state and familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. Each applicant also must provide the names and addresses of the following: (i) five lawyers and/or judges who practice in the field of criminal law and who are familiar with the applicant's practice, and (ii) opposing counsel and the judge in four recent cases tried by the applicant to verdict or entry of order. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .2510(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.
- (d) Time for Application - Application for continuing certification shall be made not more than 180 days nor less than 90 days prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.

(e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .2510 of this subchapter, including the examination.

(f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, then the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .2510 of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court June 15, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

SECTION .2600 - CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE IMMIGRATION LAW SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .2601 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates immigration law as a field of law for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this Subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 6, 1997.

27 NCAC 01D .2602 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of immigration law is the practice of law dealing with obtaining and retaining permission to enter and remain in the United States including, but not limited to, such matters as visas, changes of status, deportation and exclusion, naturalization, appearances before courts and governmental agencies, and protection of constitutional rights.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 6, 1997.

27 NCAC 01D .2603 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN IMMIGRATION LAW

If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in immigration law by meeting the standards set for the specialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Immigration Law."

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 6, 1997.

27 NCAC 01D .2604 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in immigration law shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this Subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 6, 1997.

27 NCAC 01D .2605 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN IMMIGRATION LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in immigration law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification in immigration law:

(a) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.

(b) Substantial Involvement - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in the practice of immigration law.

- (1) An applicant shall affirm that during the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 700 hours a year to the practice of immigration law, but not less than 400

hours in any one year. Service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of immigration law for two semesters may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement.

- (2) An applicant shall show substantial involvement in immigration law for the required period by providing such information as may be required by the board regarding the applicant's participation in at least four of the seven categories of activities listed below during the five years immediately preceding the date of application. For the purposes of this section, "representation" means the entry as the attorney of record and/or having primary responsibility of preparation of the case for presentation before the appropriate adjudicatory agency or tribunal.

- (A) Family Immigration. Representation of clients before the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or the State Department in family-based applications, including the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).
- (B) Employment- Related Immigration. Representation of employers or aliens before the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), USCIS, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)(including I-9 reviews in anticipation of ICE audits), or the Department of State in employment-related immigration matters and filings.
- (C) Naturalization and Citizenship. Representation of clients before USCIS in naturalization and citizenship matters.
- (D) Administrative Hearings and Appeals. Representation of clients before immigration judges in removal, bond redetermination, and other administrative matters; and the representation of clients in appeals taken before the Board of Immigration Appeals and the Attorney General, the Administrative Appeals Office, the Board of Alien Labor Certification Appeals and DOL Commissioners, or the Office of Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices (OCAHO).
- (E) Federal Litigation. Representation of clients before Article III courts in habeas corpus petitions, mandamus or Administrative Procedures Act complaints, criminal prosecution of violations of immigration law, district court naturalization and denaturalization proceedings, or petitions for review or certiorari.
- (F) Asylum and Refugee Status. Representation of clients before USCIS or immigration judges in applications for asylum, withholding of removal, protection under the Convention Against Torture, or adjustment of status for refugees or asylees.
- (G) Applications for Temporary or Humanitarian Protection. Representation of clients before USCIS, ICE, immigration judges, or the Department of State in applications for Temporary Protected Status, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), parole in place, humanitarian parole, deferred action, orders of supervision, U and T visas, or other similar protections and benefits.

(c) Continuing Legal Education - An applicant must earn no less than 44 hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) credits in topics relating to immigration law during the four years preceding application.

(d) Peer Review - An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of ten lawyers or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice in North Carolina. At least four of the completed peer reference forms received by the board must be from lawyers or judges who have substantial practice or judicial experience in immigration law. An applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.

- (1) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant, nor may the reference be a partner or associate of the applicant at the time of the application.
- (2) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board with the application for certification in the specialty field. These forms shall be returned directly to the specialty committee.

(e) Examination - The applicant must pass a written examination designed to test the applicant's knowledge, skills, and proficiency in immigration law. The examination shall be in written form and shall be given annually. The examination shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. March 6, 1997;

Amended Eff. February 1, 2025; October 2, 2014; September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01D .2606 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .2606(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

(a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .2605(b) of this subchapter.

(b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must have earned no less than 55 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in topics relating to immigration law as accredited by the board.

(c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state and familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .2605(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.

(d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than one hundred eighty (180) days nor less than ninety days prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.

(e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .2605 of this subchapter, including the examination.

(f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, then the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .2605 of this subchapter.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court March 6, 1997;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: October 2, 2014; March 27, 2019;
Amended Eff. February 1, 2025.*

27 NCAC 01D .2607 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in immigration law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 6, 1997.*

SECTION .2700 – CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .2701 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates workers' compensation as a field of law for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this Subchapter) is permitted.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. May 4, 2000.*

27 NCAC 01D .2702 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of workers' compensation is the practice of law involving the analysis of problems or controversies arising under the North Carolina Workers' Compensation Act (Chapter 97, North Carolina General Statutes) and the litigation of those matters before the North Carolina Industrial Commission.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. May 4, 2000.*

27 NCAC 01D .2703 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION LAW

If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in workers' compensation law by meeting the standards set for the specialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Workers' Compensation Law."

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. May 4, 2000.*

27 NCAC 01D .2704 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in workers' compensation law shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this Subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. May 4, 2000.*

27 NCAC 01D .2705 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in workers' compensation law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification in workers' compensation law:

(a) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.

(b) Substantial Involvement - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in the practice of workers' compensation law.

(1) Substantial involvement shall mean during the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 500 hours a year to the practice of workers' compensation law, but not less than 400 hours in any one year. "Practice" shall mean substantive legal work done primarily for the purpose of providing legal advice or representation, or a practice equivalent.

(2) "Practice equivalent" shall mean:

(A) Service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of workers' compensation law for one year or more may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .2705(b)(1) above;

(B) Service as a mediator of workers' compensation cases may be included in the hours necessary to satisfy the requirement set forth in Rule .2705(b)(1) above;

(C) Service as a deputy commissioner or commissioner of the North Carolina Industrial Commission may be substituted for the substantial involvement requirements in Rule .2705(b)(1) above provided

(i) the applicant was a full time deputy commissioner or commissioner throughout the five years prior to application, or

(ii) the applicant was engaged in the private representation of clients for at least one year during the five years immediately preceding the application; and, during this year, the applicant devoted not less than 400 hours to the practice of workers' compensation law. During the remaining four years, the applicant was either engaged in the private representation of clients and devoted an average of at least 500 hours a year to the practice of workers' compensation law, but not less than 400 hours in any one year, or served as a full time deputy commissioner or commissioner of the North Carolina Industrial Commission.

(3) The board may require an applicant to show substantial involvement in workers' compensation law by providing information regarding the applicant's participation, during the five years immediately preceding the date of the application, in activities such as those listed below:

(A) representation as principal counsel of record in complex cases tried to an opinion and award of the North Carolina Industrial Commission;

- (B) representation in occupational disease cases tried to an opinion and award of the North Carolina Industrial Commission; and
- (C) representation in appeals of decisions to the North Carolina Court of Appeals or the North Carolina Supreme Court.

(c) Continuing Legal Education - An applicant must earn no less than 36 hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) credits in workers' compensation law and related fields during the three years preceding application, with not less than six credits earned in courses on workers' compensation law in any one year. The remaining 18 hours may be earned in courses on workers' compensation law or any of the following related fields: civil trial practice and procedure; evidence; insurance; mediation; medical injuries, medicine, or anatomy; labor and employment law; Social Security disability law; and the law relating to long-term disability or Medicaid/Medicare claims.

(d) Peer Review - An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of ten lawyers, commissioners or deputy commissioners of the North Carolina Industrial Commission, or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice in North Carolina and have substantial practice or judicial experience in workers' compensation law. An applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.

- (1) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a partner or associate of the applicant at the time of the application.
- (2) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board to each reference. These forms shall be returned directly to the specialty committee.

(e) Examination - An applicant must pass a written examination designed to demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skills, and proficiency in the field of workers' compensation law to justify the representation of special competence to the legal profession and the public. The examination shall be given annually in written form and shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

Approved by the Supreme Court May 4, 2000;

Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 10, 2011; March 5, 2015; December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .2706 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .2706(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

(a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .2705(b) of this subchapter, provided, however, that a specialist who served on the Industrial Commission as a full time commissioner or deputy commissioner during the five years preceding application may substitute each year of service on the Industrial Commission for one year of practice.

(b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must earn no less than 60 hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) credits in workers' compensation law and related fields during the five years preceding application. Of the 60 hours of CLE, at least 30 hours shall be in workers' compensation law, and the balance may be in the following related fields: civil trial practice and procedure; evidence; insurance; mediation; medical injuries, medicine, or anatomy; labor and employment law; Social Security disability law; and the law relating to long-term disability or Medicaid/Medicare claims. The specialist must earn not less than six credits in courses on workers' compensation law each year and the balance of credits may be earned in courses on workers' compensation law or any of the related fields previously listed.

(c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers, commissioners or deputy commissioners of the North Carolina Industrial Commission, or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state and familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .2705(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.

(d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than 180 days nor less than ninety days prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.

(e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .2705 of this subchapter, including the examination.

(f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, then the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .2705 of this subchapter.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court May 4, 2000;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 10, 2011; March 5, 2015; September 22, 2016;
March 27, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .2707 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in workers' compensation law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. May 4, 2000.

SECTION .2800 - CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY LAW SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .2801 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates Social Security disability law as a field of law for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 2, 2006.

27 NCAC 01D .2802 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of Social Security disability law is the practice of law relating to the analysis of claims and controversies arising under Title II and Title XVI of the Social Security Act and the representation of claimants in those matters before the Social Security Administration and/or the federal courts.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 2, 2006.

27 NCAC 01D .2803 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY LAW

If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in Social Security disability law by meeting the standards set for the specialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Social Security Disability Law."

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 2, 2006.

27 NCAC 01D .2804 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in Social Security disability law shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 2, 2006.

27 NCAC 01D .2805 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in Social Security disability law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification in Social Security disability law:

(a) **Licensure and Practice.** An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.

(b) **Substantial Involvement.** An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in the practice of Social Security disability law.

- (1) "Substantial involvement" shall mean during the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 600 hours a year to the practice of Social Security disability law, but not less than 500 hours in any one year. "Practice" shall mean substantive legal work done primarily for the purpose of providing legal advice or representation, or a practice equivalent.
- (2) "Practice equivalent" shall mean:
 - (A) Service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of Social Security disability law for one year or more may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .2805(b)(1) above;
 - (B) Service as a Social Security administrative law judge, Social Security staff lawyer, or assistant United States attorney involved in cases arising under Title II and Title XVI may be substituted for three of the five years necessary to satisfy the requirement set forth in Rule .2805(b)(1) above;
- (3) The board may require an applicant to show substantial involvement in Social Security disability law by providing information regarding the applicant's participation, during his or her legal career, as primary counsel of record in the following:
 - (A) Proceedings before an administrative law judge;
 - (B) Cases appealed to the appeals council of the Social Security Administration; and
 - (C) Cases appealed to federal district court.

(c) **Continuing Legal Education.** An applicant must earn no less than 36 hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) credits in Social Security disability law and related fields during the three years preceding application, with not less than six credits earned in any one year. Of the 36 hours of CLE, at least 18 hours shall be in Social Security disability law, and the balance may be in the following related fields: trial skills and advocacy; practice management; medical injuries, medicine, or anatomy; ERISA; labor and employment law; elder law; workers' compensation law; veterans' disability law; and the law relating to long term disability or Medicaid/Medicare claims.

(d) **Peer Review.** An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of ten lawyers or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice law in a jurisdiction in the United States and have substantial practice or judicial experience in Social Security disability law. An applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.

- (1) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a partner or associate of the applicant at the time of the application.
- (2) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board to each reference. These forms shall be returned directly to the specialty committee.

(e) **Examination.** An applicant must pass a written examination designed to demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skills, and proficiency in the field of Social Security disability law to justify the representation of special competence to the legal profession and the public. The examination shall be given annually in written form and shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.

- (1) **Subject Matter** - The examination shall cover the applicant's knowledge and application of the law relating to the following:
 - (A) Title II and Title XVI of the Social Security Act;
 - (B) Federal practice and procedure in Social Security disability cases;
 - (C) Medical proof of disability;
 - (D) Vocational aspects of disability;
 - (E) Workers' compensation offset;

- (F) Eligibility for Medicare and Medicaid;
- (G) Eligibility for Social Security retirement and survivors benefits;
- (H) Interaction of Social Security benefits with employee benefits (e.g., long term disability and back pay);
- (I) Equal Access to Justice Act; and
- (J) Fee collection and other ethical issues in Social Security practice.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Approved by the Supreme Court March 2, 2006;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 10, 2011; December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .2806 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .2806(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

- (a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .2805(b) of this subchapter.
- (b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must earn no less than 60 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in Social Security disability law and related fields during the five years preceding application. Not less than six of the credits may be earned in any one year. Of the 60 hours of CLE, at least 20 hours shall be in Social Security disability law, and the balance may be in the following related fields: trial skills and advocacy; practice management; medical injuries, medicine, or anatomy; ERISA; labor and employment law; elder law; workers' compensation law; veterans' disability law; and the law relating to long term disability or Medicaid/Medicare claims.
- (c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in a jurisdiction in the United States and are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .2805(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.
- (d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than 180 days nor less than 80 days prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.
- (e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .2805 of this subchapter, including the examination.
- (f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, then the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .2805 of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Adopted by the Supreme Court March 2, 2006;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 10, 2011; March 27, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .2807 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in Social Security disability law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Adopted Eff. March 2, 2006.

SECTION .2900 - CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE ELDER LAW SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .2901 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates elder law as a field of law for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this Subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. February 5, 2009.

27 NCAC 01D .2902 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of elder law is the practice of law involving the counseling and representation of older persons and their representatives relative to the legal aspects of health and long term care planning; public benefits; surrogate decision-making, legal capacity; the conservation, disposition, and administration of the estates of older persons; and the implementation of decisions of older persons and their representatives relative to the foregoing with due consideration to the applicable tax consequences of an action, or the need for more sophisticated tax expertise.

Lawyers certified in elder law must be capable of recognizing issues that arise during counseling and representation of older persons, or their representatives, with respect to abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the older person, insurance, housing, long term care, employment, and retirement. The elder law specialist must also be familiar with professional and non-legal resources and services publicly and privately available to meet the needs of the older persons, and be capable of recognizing the professional conduct and ethical issues that arise during representation.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. February 5, 2009.

27 NCAC 01D .2903 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN ELDER LAW

If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in elder law by meeting the standards set for the specialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Elder Law."

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. February 5, 2009.

27 NCAC 01D .2904 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in elder law shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this Subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. February 5, 2009.

27 NCAC 01D .2905 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN ELDER LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in elder law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification in elder law:

(a) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.

(b) Substantial Involvement - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in the practice of elder law.

(1) Substantial involvement shall mean during the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 700 hours a year to the practice of elder law, but not less than 400 hours in any one year. Practice shall mean substantive legal work done primarily for the purpose of providing legal advice or representation, or a practice equivalent.

(2) Practice equivalent shall mean service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of elder law (or such other related fields as approved by the specialty committee and the board) for one year or more. Such service may be substituted for one year of experience to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .2905(b)(1) above.

(c) Substantial Involvement Experience Requirements - In addition to the showing required by Rule .2905(b), an applicant shall show substantial involvement in elder law by providing information regarding the applicant's participation, during the

five years immediately preceding the date of the application, in at least sixty (60) elder law matters in the categories set forth in Rule .2905(c)(3) below.

- (1) As used in this section, an applicant will be considered to have participated in an elder law matter if the applicant:
 - (A) provided advice (written or oral, but if oral, supported by substantial documentation in the client's file) tailored to and based on facts and circumstances specific to a particular client;
 - (B) drafted legal documents such as, but not limited to, wills, trusts, or health care directives, provided that those legal documents were tailored to and based on facts and circumstances specific to the particular client;
 - (C) prepared legal documents and took other steps necessary for the administration of a previously prepared legal directive such as, but not limited to, a will or trust; or
 - (D) provided representation to a party in contested litigation or administrative matters concerning an elder law issue.
- (2) Of the 60 elder law matters:
 - (A) forty (40) must be in the experience categories listed in Rule .2905(c)(3)(A) through (E) with at least five matters in each category;
 - (B) ten (10) must be in experience categories listed in Rule .2905(c)(3)(F) through (N), with no more than five in any one category; and
 - (C) the remaining ten (10) may be in any category listed in Rule .2905(c)(3), and are not subject to the limitations set forth in Rule .2905(c)(2)(B) or (C).
- (3) Experience Categories:
 - (A) health and personal care planning including giving advice regarding, and preparing, advance medical directives (medical powers of attorney, living wills, and health care declarations) and counseling older persons, attorneys-in-fact, and families about medical and life-sustaining choices, and related personal life choices.
 - (B) pre-mortem legal planning including giving advice and preparing documents regarding wills, trusts, durable general or financial powers of attorney, real estate, gifting, and the financial and tax implications of any proposed action.
 - (C) fiduciary representation including seeking the appointment of, giving advice to, representing, or serving as executor, personal representative, attorney-in-fact, trustee, guardian, conservator, representative payee, or other formal or informal fiduciary.
 - (D) legal capacity counseling including advising how capacity is determined and the level of capacity required for various legal activities, and representing those who are or may be the subject of guardianship/conservatorship proceedings or other protective arrangements.
 - (E) public benefits advice including planning for and assisting in obtaining Medicaid, supplemental security income, and veterans benefits.
 - (F) special needs counseling, including the planning, drafting, and administration of special/supplemental needs trusts, housing, employment, education, and related issues.
 - (G) advice on insurance matters including analyzing and explaining the types of insurance available, such as health, life, long term care, home care, COBRA, medigap, long term disability, dread disease, and burial/funeral policies.
 - (H) resident rights advocacy including advising patients and residents of hospitals, nursing facilities, continuing care retirement communities, assisted living facilities, adult care facilities, and those cared for in their homes of their rights and appropriate remedies in matters such as admission, transfer and discharge policies, quality of care, and related issues.
 - (I) housing counseling including reviewing the options available and the financing of those options such as: mortgage alternatives, renovation loan programs, life care contracts, and home equity conversion.
 - (J) employment and retirement advice including pensions, retiree health benefits, unemployment benefits, and other benefits.
 - (K) counseling with regard to age and/or disability discrimination in employment and housing.
 - (L) litigation and administrative advocacy in connection with any of the above matters, including will contests, contested capacity issues, elder abuse (including financial or consumer fraud), fiduciary administration, public benefits, nursing home torts, and discrimination.

(d) Continuing Legal Education - An applicant must earn forty-five (45) hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) in elder law during the three full calendar years preceding application and the year of application, with not less than nine (9) credits earned in any of the three calendar years. Elder law CLE is any accredited program on a subject identified in the experience categories described in subparagraph (c)(3) of this rule.

(e) Peer Review - An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of ten lawyers or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice in North Carolina and have substantial practice or judicial experience in elder law or in a related field as set forth in Rule .2905(d). An applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.

(1) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a partner or associate of the applicant at the time of the application.

(2) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board to each reference. These forms shall be returned directly to the specialty committee.

(f) Examination - An applicant must pass a written examination designed to demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skills, and proficiency in the field of elder law to justify the representation of special competence to the legal profession and the public. The examination shall be given annually in written form and shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee or by any ABA accredited elder law certification organization with which the board contracts pursuant to Rule .1716(10) of this subchapter.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court February 5, 2009;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 11, 2010; March 10, 2011; March 8, 2012;
September 20, 2018; December 14, 2021.*

27 NCAC 01D .2906 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .2906(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

(a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .2905(b) of this subchapter.

(b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must earn seventy-five (75) hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) credits in elder law during the five calendar years preceding application, with not less than ten (10) credits earned in any calendar year. Elder law CLE is any accredited program on a subject identified in the experience categories described in Rule .2905(c)(3) of this subchapter.

(c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state and familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .2905(e) of this subchapter apply to this standard.

(d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than 180 days nor less than 90 days prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.

(e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .2905 of this subchapter, including the examination.

(f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, then the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .2905 of this subchapter.

*History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court February 5, 2009;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 20, 2018; March 27, 2019.*

27 NCAC 01D .2907 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in elder law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 84-23;*
 Eff. February 5, 2009.

SECTION .3000 - CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE APPELLATE PRACTICE SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .3001 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates appellate practice as a field of law for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this Subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 84-23;*
 Eff. March 10, 2011.

27 NCAC 01D .3002 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of appellate practice is the practice of law relating to appeals to the Appellate Division of the North Carolina General Courts of Justice, as well as appeals to appellate-level courts of any state or territory of the United States, the Supreme Court of the United States, the United States Courts of Appeals, the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces and the United States Courts of Criminal Appeals for the armed forces, and any tribal appellate court for a federally recognized Indian tribe (hereafter referred to as a "state or federal appellate court" or collectively as "state and federal appellate courts").

History Note: *Authority G.S. 84-23;*
 Eff. March 10, 2011.

27 NCAC 01D .3003 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN APPELLATE PRACTICE

If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in appellate practice by meeting the standards for the specialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Appellate Practice." Any lawyer who is entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Criminal Appellate Practice" (having been certified as such under the standards set forth in Section .2500 of this Subchapter) at the time of the adoption of these standards shall also be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Appellate Practice" and shall thereafter meet the standards for continued certification under Rule .3006 of this Section in lieu of the standards for continued certification under Rule .2506 of Section .2500 of this Subchapter.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 84-23;*
 Eff. March 10, 2011.

27 NCAC 01D .3004 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in appellate practice shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this Subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 84-23;*
 Eff. March 10, 2011.

27 NCAC 01D .3005 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN APPELLATE PRACTICE

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in appellate practice shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this Subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification in appellate practice:

(a) **Licensure and Practice.** An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.

(b) Substantial Involvement. An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in appellate practice.

- (1) Substantial involvement shall mean that during the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 400 hours a year, and not less than 100 hours in any one year, to appellate practice. "Practice" shall mean substantive legal work done primarily for the purpose of providing legal advice or representation including activities described in Paragraph (2) below, or a practice equivalent as described in Paragraph (3) below.
- (2) Substantive legal work in appellate practice includes, but is not limited to, the following: preparation of a record on appeal or joint appendix for filing in any state or federal appellate court; researching, drafting, or editing of a legal brief, motion, petition, or response for filing in any state or federal appellate court; participation in or preparation for oral argument before any state or federal appellate court; appellate mediation, either as the representative of a party or as a mediator, in any state or federal appellate court; consultation on issues of appellate practice including consultation with trial counsel for the purpose of preserving a record for appeal; service on a committee or commission whose principal focus is the study or revision of the rules of appellate procedure of the North Carolina or federal courts; authoring a treatise, text, law review article, or other scholarly work relating to appellate practice; teaching appellate advocacy at an ABA accredited law school; and coaching in appellate moot court programs.
- (3) "Practice equivalent" shall include the following activities:
 - (A) Service as a trial judge for any North Carolina General Court of Justice, United States Bankruptcy Court, or United States District Court, including service as a magistrate judge, for one year or more may be substituted for one year of experience toward the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .3005(b)(1).
 - (B) Service as a full-time, compensated law clerk for any North Carolina or federal appellate court for one year or more may be substituted for one year of experience toward the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .3005(b)(1).
 - (C) Service as an appellate judge for any North Carolina or federal appellate court may be substituted for the equivalent years of experience toward the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .3005(b)(1) as long as the applicant's experience, before the applicant took the bench, included substantial involvement in appellate practice (as defined in Paragraph (b)(1)) for two years before the applicant's service as an appellate judge.
- (4) An applicant must also demonstrate substantial involvement in appellate practice by providing information regarding the applicant's participation during his or her legal career in the following:
 - (A) Five oral arguments to any state or federal appellate court; and
 - (B) Principal authorship of 10 briefs submitted to any state or federal appellate court.

(c) Continuing Legal Education. An applicant must earn no fewer than 36 hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) credits in appellate practice and related fields during the three years preceding application, with no less than six credits to be earned in any one year. Of the 36 hours of CLE, at least 18 hours shall be in appellate practice, and the balance may be in the following related fields: trial advocacy; civil trial practice and procedure; criminal trial practice and procedure; evidence; legal writing; legal research; and mediation. An applicant may ask the specialty committee to recognize an additional field as related to appellate practice for the purpose of meeting the CLE standard. An applicant who uses authorship of a treatise, text, law review article, or other scholarly work relating to appellate practice or the teaching of appellate advocacy at an ABA-accredited law school to satisfy the substantial involvement requirement in Paragraph (b) of this Rule may not use the same experience to satisfy the CLE requirements of this Paragraph (c).

(d) Peer Review. An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of 10 lawyers or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice law and must have significant legal or judicial experience in appellate practice. An applicant consents to confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee to the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.

- (1) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a colleague at the applicant's place of employment at the time of the application.
- (2) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board to each reference. These forms shall be returned to the board and forwarded by the board to the specialty committee.

(e) Examination. An applicant must pass an examination designed to allow the applicant to demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skills, and proficiency in the field of appellate practice to justify the representation of special competence to the legal profession and the public. The examination shall be given annually and shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee. The exam shall include a written component which may be take-home and may include an oral argument before a moot court.

- (1) Subject Matter – The examination shall cover the applicant's knowledge and application of the following:
 - (A) The North Carolina Rules of Appellate Procedure;
 - (B) North Carolina General Statutes relating to appeals;
 - (C) The Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure;
 - (D) Federal statutes relating to appeals;
 - (E) The Local Rules and Internal Operating Procedures of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit;
 - (F) The Rules of the United States Supreme Court;
 - (G) Brief writing;
 - (H) Oral argument; and
 - (I) Principles of appellate jurisdiction.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court March 10, 2011;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .3006 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .3006(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

- (a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application for continuing certification, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .3005(b) of this subchapter.
- (b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must earn no less than 60 hours of accredited CLE credits in appellate practice and related fields during the five years preceding application for continuing certification. No less than six of the credits may be earned in any one year. Of the 60 hours of CLE, at least 20 hours shall be in appellate practice, and the balance may be in the related fields set forth in Rule .3005(c).
- (c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law, have significant legal or judicial experience in appellate practice, and are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .3005(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.
- (d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than 180 days, nor less than 90 days, prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.
- (e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such a lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .3005 of this subchapter, including the examination.
- (f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .3005 of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court March 10, 2011;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 27, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .3007 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in appellate practice are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure, adopted by the board, that applies to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. March 10, 2011.

27 NCAC 01D .3008 ADVISORY MEMBERS OF THE APPELLATE PRACTICE SPECIALTY COMMITTEE

The board may appoint former chief justices of the North Carolina Supreme Court to serve as advisory members of the Appellate Practice Specialty Committee. Notwithstanding any other provision in The Plan of Legal Specialization (Section .1700 of this Subchapter) or this Section .3000, the board may waive the requirements of Rule .3005(d) and (e) above if an advisory committee member has served at least one year on the North Carolina Supreme Court and may permit the advisory member to file an application to become a board certified specialist in appellate practice upon compliance with all other required standards for certification in the specialty. Advisory members shall hold office for an initial term of three years and shall thereafter serve at the discretion of the board.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. March 10, 2011.

SECTION .3100 - CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE TRADEMARK LAW SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .3101 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates trademark law as a specialty for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this Subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. March 8, 2013.

27 NCAC 01D .3102 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of trademark law is the practice of law devoted to commercial symbols, and typically includes the following: advising clients regarding creating and selecting trademarks; conducting and/or analyzing trademark searches; prosecuting trademark applications; enforcing and protecting trademark rights; and counseling clients on matters involving trademarks. Practitioners regularly practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board (TTAB), the Trademark Division of the NC Secretary of State's Office, and the North Carolina and/or federal courts.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. March 8, 2013.

27 NCAC 01D .3103 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN TRADEMARK LAW

If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in trademark law by meeting the standards set for the specialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Trademark Law."

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. March 8, 2013.

27 NCAC 01D .3104 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in trademark law shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this Subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. March 8, 2013.

27 NCAC 01D .3105 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN TRADEMARK LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in trademark law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet following standards for certification in trademark law:

(a) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.

(b) Substantial Involvement - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in trademark law.

- (1) Substantial involvement shall mean that during the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 500 hours a year to the practice of trademark law, but not less than 400 hours in any one year.
- (2) Practice shall mean substantive legal work in trademark law done primarily for the purpose of legal advice or representation or a practice equivalent.
- (3) "Practice equivalent" shall mean:
 - (A) Service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of trademark law which may be substituted for up to two years of experience to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .3105(b)(1).
 - (B) Service as a trademark examiner at the USPTO or a functionally equivalent trademark office for any state or foreign government which may be substituted for up to two years of experience to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .3105(b)(1).
 - (C) Service as an administrative law judge for the TTAB which may be substituted for up to three years of experience to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .3105(b)(1).
- (4) The board may, in its discretion, require an applicant to provide additional information as evidence of substantial involvement in trademark law, including information regarding the applicant's participation, during his or her legal career, in the following: portfolio management, prosecution of trademark applications, search and clearance of trademarks, licensing, due diligence, domain name selection and dispute resolution, TTAB litigation, state court trademark litigation, federal court trademark litigation, trademark dispute resolution, and international trademark law.

(c) Continuing Legal Education - To be certified as a specialist in trademark law, an applicant must have earned no less than 36 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in trademark law during the three years preceding application. The 36 hours must include at least 20 hours in trademark law and the remaining 16 hours in related courses including: business transactions, copyright, franchise law, internet law, sports and entertainment law, trade secrets, and unfair competition.

(d) Peer Review - An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of ten lawyers or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice law and must have significant legal or judicial experience in trademark law. An applicant consents to confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee to the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.

- (1) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a colleague at the applicant's place of employment at the time of the application.
- (2) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board to each reference. These forms shall be returned to the board and forwarded by the board to the specialty committee.

(e) Examination - An applicant must pass a written examination designed to demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skills, and proficiency in the field of trademark law to justify the representation of special competence to the legal profession and the public.

- (1) Terms - The examination shall be given annually in written form and shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.
- (2) Subject Matter - The examination shall cover the applicant's knowledge and application of trademark law and rules of practice, and may include the following statutes and related case law:
 - (A) The Lanham Act (15 U.S.C. § 1501 et seq.);
 - (B) Trademark Regulations (37 CFR Part 2);
 - (C) Trademark Manual of Examining Procedure (TMEP);
 - (D) Trademark Trial and Appeal Board Manual of Procedure (TBMP);
 - (E) The Trademark Counterfeiting Act of 1984 (18 U.S.C. § 2320 et seq.); and
 - (F) North Carolina Trademark Act (N.C. Gen. Stat. Chap. 80).

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court March 8, 2013;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .3106 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .3106(d). No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

(a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application for continuing certification, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .3105(b) of this subchapter.

(b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must earn no less than 60 hours of accredited CLE credits in trademark law and related fields during the five years preceding application for continuing certification. No less than six of the credits may be earned in any one year. Of the 60 hours of CLE, at least 34 hours shall be in trademark law, and the balance of 26 hours may be in the related fields set forth in Rule .3105(c) of this subchapter.

(c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law, have significant legal or judicial experience in trademark law, and are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .3105(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.

(d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than 180 days, nor less than 90 days, prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.

(e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such a lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .3105 of this subchapter, including the examination.

(f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .3105 of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court March 8, 2013;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 27, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .3107 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in trademark law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. March 8, 2013.

SECTION .3200 – CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE UTILITIES LAW SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .3201 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates utilities law as a specialty for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. June 9, 2016.

27 NCAC 01D .3202 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of utilities law is the practice of law focusing on the North Carolina Public Utilities Act (Chapter 62 of the North Carolina General Statutes) and practice before the North Carolina Utilities Commission (the Commission) and related state and federal regulatory bodies.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. June 9, 2016.

27 NCAC 01D .3203 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN UTILITIES LAW

If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in utilities law by meeting the standards set for the specialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Utilities Law."

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. June 9, 2016.

27 NCAC 01D .3204 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in utilities law shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. June 9, 2016.

27 NCAC 01D .3205 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN UTILITIES LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in utilities law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this Subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet the following standards for certification in utilities law:

(a) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.

(b) Substantial Involvement - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in utilities law.

- (1) Substantial involvement shall mean that during the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 500 hours a year to the practice of utilities law but not less than 400 hours in any one year.
- (2) Practice shall mean substantive legal work in utilities law done primarily for the purpose of providing legal advice or representation, including the activities described in Paragraph (3), or a practice equivalent as described in Paragraph (4).
- (3) Substantive legal work in utilities law includes, but is not limited to, practice before or representation in matters relative to the Commission, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR), North American Electric Reliability Corporation, utilities commissions of other states, and related state and federal regulatory bodies as well as participation in committee work of organizations or continuing legal education programs that are focused on subject matter involved in practice before the Commission or related state and federal regulatory bodies.
- (4) "Practice equivalent" shall mean:
 - (A) Each year of service as a commissioner on the Commission during the five years prior to application may be substituted for a year of the experience necessary to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .3205(b)(1).
 - (B) Each year of service on the legal staff of the Commission or of the Public Staff during the five years prior to application may be substituted for a year of the experience necessary to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .3205(b)(1).

(c) Continuing Legal Education – To be certified as a specialist in utilities law, an applicant must have earned no less than 36 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in utilities law and related fields during the three years preceding application. The 36 hours must include at least 18 hours in utilities law; the remaining 18 hours may be in related-field CLE.

Utilities law CLE includes but is not limited to courses on the subjects identified in Rule .3202 and Rule .3205(b)(3) of this Subchapter. A list of the topics that qualify as related-field CLE shall be maintained by the board on its official website.

(d) Peer Review - An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of ten lawyers or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice law and must have significant legal or judicial experience in utilities law. An applicant consents to confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee to the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.

(1) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a colleague at the applicant's place of employment at the time of the application.

(2) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board to each reference. These forms shall be returned to the board and forwarded by the board to the specialty committee.

(e) Examination - An applicant must pass a written examination designed to demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skills, and proficiency in the field of utilities law to justify the representation of special competence to the legal profession and the public.

(1) Terms - The examination shall be given annually in written form and shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.

(2) Subject Matter - The examination shall test the applicant's knowledge and application of utilities law.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court June 9, 2016;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: December 14, 2021.*

27 NCAC 01D .3206 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .3206(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

(a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application for continuing certification, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .3205(b) of this subchapter.

(b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must earn no less than 60 hours of accredited CLE credits in utilities law and related fields during the five years preceding application for continuing certification. Of the 60 hours of CLE, at least 30 hours shall be in utilities law, and the balance of 30 hours may be in the related fields set forth in Rule .3205(c).

(c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law, have significant legal or judicial experience in utilities law, and are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .3205(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.

(d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than 180 days, nor less than 90 days, prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.

(e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such a lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .3205 of this subchapter, including the examination.

(f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification has been suspended or revoked during the period of certification, the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .3205 of this subchapter.

*History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court June 9, 2016;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 27, 2019.*

27 NCAC 01D .3207 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in utilities law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. June 9, 2016.

section .3300 - certification standards for the privacy and information security law

27 NCAC 01D .3301 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates privacy and information security law as a specialty for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court September 28, 2017.

27 NCAC 01D .3302 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of privacy and information security law encompasses the laws that regulate the collection, storage, sharing, monetization, security, disposal, and permissible uses of personal or confidential information about individuals, businesses, and organizations, and the security of information regarding individuals and the information systems of businesses and organizations. The specialty also includes legal requirements and risks related to cyber incidents, such as external intrusions into computer systems, and cyber threats, such as governmental information sharing programs.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court September 28, 2017.

27 NCAC 01D .3303 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SECURITY LAW

If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in privacy and information security law by meeting the standards set for the specialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Privacy and Information Security Law."

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court September 28, 2017.

27 NCAC 01D .3304 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in privacy and information security law shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court September 28, 2017.

27 NCAC 01D .3305 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SECURITY LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in privacy and information security law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet following standards for certification in privacy and information security law:

- (a) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.
- (b) Substantial Involvement - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in privacy and information security law.

- (1) Substantial involvement shall mean that during the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 400 hours a year to the practice of privacy and information security law but not less than 300 hours in any one year.
- (2) Practice shall mean substantive legal work in privacy and information security law done primarily for the purpose of providing legal advice or representation, including the activities described in paragraph (3), or a practice equivalent as described in paragraph (4).
- (3) Substantive legal work in privacy and information security law includes, but is not limited to, representation on compliance, transactions and litigation relative to the laws that regulate the collection, storage, sharing, monetization, security, disposal, and permissible uses of personal or confidential information about individuals, businesses, and organizations. Practice in this specialty requires the application of information technology principles including current data security concepts and best practices. Legal work in the specialty includes, but is not limited to, knowledge and application of the following: data breach response laws, data security laws, and data disposal laws; unauthorized access to information systems, such as password theft, hacking, and wiretapping, including the Stored Communications Act, the Wiretap Act, and other anti-interception laws; cyber security mandates; website privacy policies and practices, including the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA); electronic signatures and records, including the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (E-SIGN Act) and the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA); e-commerce laws and contractual legal frameworks related to privacy and data security such as Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI-DSS) and the NACHA rules; direct marketing, including the CAN-SPAM Act, Do-Not-Call, and Do-Not-Fax laws; international privacy compliance, including the European Union data protection requirements; social media policies and regulatory enforcement of privacy-related concerns pertaining to the same; financial privacy, including the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, the Financial Privacy Act, the Bank Secrecy Act, and other federal and state financial laws, and the regulations of the federal financial regulators including the SEC, CFPB, and FinCEN; unauthorized transaction and fraudulent funds transfer laws, including the Electronic Funds Transfer Act and Regulation E, as well as the Uniform Commercial Code; credit reporting laws and other "background check" laws, including the Fair Credit Reporting Act; identity theft laws, including the North Carolina Identity Theft Protection Act and the Federal Trade Commission's "Red Flags" regulations; health information privacy, including the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA); educational privacy, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and state laws governing student privacy and education technology; employment privacy law; and privacy torts.
- (4) "Practice equivalent" shall mean:
 - (A) Full-time employment as a compliance officer for a business or organization for one year or more during the five years prior to application may be substituted for an equivalent number of the years of experience necessary to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .3305(b)(1) if at least 25% of the applicant's work was devoted to privacy and information security implementation.
 - (B) Service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of privacy and information security law for one year or more during the five years prior to application may be substituted for an equivalent number of years of experience necessary to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .3305(b)(1);

(c) Continuing Legal Education - To be certified as a specialist in privacy and information security law, an applicant must have earned no less than 36 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in privacy and information security law and related fields during the three years preceding application. The 36 hours must include at least 18 hours in privacy and information security law; the remaining 18 hours may be in related-field CLE or technical (non-legal) continuing education (CE). At least six credits each year must be earned in privacy and information security law. Privacy and information security law CLE includes but is not limited to courses on the subjects identified in Rule .3302 and Rule .3305(b)(3) of this subchapter. A list of the topics that qualify as related-field CLE and technical CE shall be maintained by the board on its official website.

(d) Peer Review - An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of ten lawyers or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field to serve as references for the applicant. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina or another jurisdiction in the United States; however, no more than five references may be licensed in another jurisdiction. References with legal or judicial experience in privacy and information security law are preferred. An applicant consents to confidential inquiry by the

board or the specialty committee to the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.

- (1) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a colleague at the applicant's place of employment at the time of the application. A lawyer who is in-house counsel for an entity that is the applicant's client may serve as a reference.
 - (2) Peer review shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board to each reference. These forms shall be returned to the board and forwarded by the board to the specialty committee.
- (e) Examination - An applicant must pass a written examination designed to demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skills, and proficiency in the field of privacy and information security law to justify the representation of special competence to the legal profession and the public.
- (1) Terms - The examination shall be given at least once a year in written form and shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee or by an organization determined by the board to be qualified to test applicants in privacy and information security law.
 - (2) Subject Matter - The examination shall test the applicant's knowledge and application of privacy and information security law.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court September 28, 2017;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .3306 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .3306(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

- (a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application for continuing certification, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .3305(b) of this subchapter.
- (b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must earn no less than 60 hours of accredited CLE credits in privacy and information security law and related fields during the five years preceding application for continuing certification. Of the 60 hours of CLE, at least 30 hours shall be in privacy and information security law, and the balance of 30 hours may be in related field CLE or technical (non-legal) CE. At least six credits each year must be earned in privacy and information security law. A list of the topics that qualify as related-field CLE and technical CE shall be maintained by the board on its official website.
- (c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in North Carolina or another jurisdiction in the United States; however, no more than three reference may be licensed in another jurisdiction. References must be familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .3305(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.
- (d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than 180 days, nor less than 90 days, prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.
- (e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such a lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .3305 of this subchapter, including the examination.
- (f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification was suspended or revoked during a period of certification, the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .3305 of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court September 28, 2017;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 27, 2019.

27 NCAC 01D .3307 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in privacy and information security law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted by the Supreme Court September 28, 2017.

SECTION .3400 – CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE CHILD WELFARE LAW SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .3401 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates child welfare law as a specialty for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) is permitted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .3402 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

Child welfare law is a unique area of law that requires knowledge of substantive and procedural rights provided for in the North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 7B. The cases are complex and multi-faceted both in the issues they present and the number of type of court hearings required by federal and state law. The substantive area includes abuse, neglect, dependency, and termination of parental rights. Knowledge of additional substantive areas is also required; such as child custody, the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Enforcement Act, the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, the Indian Child Welfare Act, adoptions, and education law. The cases revolve around children and families that are experiencing significant issues resulting in the government's intervention to protect children's safety while also protecting parents' constitutional rights to parent their children. Child welfare differs from family law/domestic relations in that different laws and procedures apply and the government through a county department of social services is involved.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .3403 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN CHILD WELFARE LAW

If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in child welfare law by meeting the standards set for the specialty, the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Child Welfare Law."

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .3404 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in child welfare law shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .3405 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN CHILD WELFARE LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in child welfare law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet following standards for certification in child welfare law:

- (a) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.
- (b) Substantial Involvement - An applicant shall affirm to the board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in child welfare law.

- (1) Substantial involvement shall mean that during the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 500 hours a year to the practice of child welfare law but not less than 350 hours in any one year.
- (2) Practice shall mean substantive legal work in child welfare law done primarily for the purpose of providing legal advice or representation, including the activities described in paragraph (3), or a practice equivalent as described in paragraph (4).
- (3) Substantive legal work in child welfare law focuses on a combination of abuse, neglect, dependency, and termination of parental rights proceedings as governed by N.C.G.S. Chapter 7B ("the Juvenile Code"). Types of work involve staffing cases; advising clients; participating in department of social services' team meeting involving the juvenile and family; preparing for trial; researching, drafting, or editing written pleadings (petitions, motions, responses to motions, written argument to the district court, appellate briefs); representing clients in district court juvenile proceedings, and family law court proceedings with substantial child protective services involvement; participating in oral arguments before the North Carolina appellate courts; consultation on child welfare issues with other counsel and child welfare professionals; authoring scholarly work related to child welfare; and teaching child welfare i) at an ABA accredited North Carolina law school, ii) for approved CLE credit at both a North Carolina or national program, iii) for North Carolina professional continuing education requirements, and iv) for prospective and current Guardian ad Litem staff and volunteers.
- (4) "Practice equivalent" shall mean:
 - (A) Service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of child welfare law for up to two years during the five years prior to application may be substituted for an equivalent number of years of experience necessary to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .3405(b)(1);
 - (B) Service as a district court judge who has attained juvenile court certification through the AOC in North Carolina. Such certification may count for one year of experience in meeting the five-year requirement.

(c) Continuing Legal Education - To be certified as a specialist in child welfare law, an applicant must have earned no less than 36 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in child welfare law/juvenile law and related fields during the three years preceding application. The 36 hours must include at least 27 hours in child welfare/juvenile law; the remaining 9 hours may be in related-field CLE. Related fields include family law, adoption law, juvenile delinquency law, immigration law, public benefits law, ethics, education law, trial advocacy, evidence, appellate practice, and trainings on topics including implicit bias, cultural humility, disproportionality, and substance use and mental health disorders. The applicant may request recognition of an additional field as related to child welfare practice for the purpose of meeting the CLE standard.

(d) Peer Review - An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of ten lawyers or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice in North Carolina. An applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.

- (1) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a partner or associate of the applicant at the time of the application.
- (2) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board with the application for certification in the specialty field. These forms shall be returned directly to the specialty committee.

(e) Examination - The applicant must pass a written examination designed to test the applicant's knowledge and ability in child welfare law.

- (1) Terms - The examination shall be in written form and shall be given annually. The examination shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.
- (2) Subject Matter - The examination shall cover the applicant's knowledge and application of the law relating to abuse, neglect, dependency, and termination of parental rights, child custody, adoptions, and education law including, but not limited to, the following:
 - (A) State and Federal Sources of Authority: Laws, Rules, and Policy
 - (B) The Constitutional Rights of Parents and Children and Requirements of State Intervention
 - (C) Jurisdiction, Venue, Overlapping Proceedings
 - (D) Procedures Regarding the Petition, Summons and Service
 - (E) How a Case Enters the Court System
 - (F) Central Registry and Responsible Individuals List

- (G) Parties, Appointment of Counsel, and Guardians ad Litem
- (H) Purpose and Requirements of Temporary and Nonsecure Custody
- (I) Aspects of Adjudication and Its Consequences
- (J) Dispositional Hearings and Alternatives
- (K) Visitation
- (L) Permanency Outcomes
- (M) Voluntary Placements of Juveniles and Foster Care (ages 18-21)
- (N) Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) Procedure, Grounds Phase, Best Interests Phase and Legal Consequences
- (O) Post TPR/Relinquishment, Adoption, Reinstatement of Parental Rights
- (P) Applicability of Rules of Evidence and Evidentiary Standards
- (Q) Appealable Orders, Notices of Appeal and Expedited Appeals
- (R) Relevant Federal Laws Including, but not limited to, the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Enforcement Act, the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children and the Indian Child Welfare Act
- (S) Confidentiality and Information Sharing

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Approved by the Supreme Court December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .3406 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Prior to the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .3406(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

- (a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application for continuing certification, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .3405(b) of this subchapter.
- (b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must earn no less than 60 hours of accredited CLE credits in child welfare law and related fields during the five years preceding application for continuing certification. Of the 60 hours of CLE, at least 42 hours shall be in child welfare/juvenile law, and the balance of 18 hours may be in related field CLE. A list of the topics that qualify as related-field CLE and technical CE shall be maintained by the board on its official website.
- (c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in North Carolina. References must be familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .3405(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.
- (d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than 180 days, nor less than 90 days, prior to the expiration of the prior period of certification.
- (e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such a lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .3405 of this subchapter, including the examination.
- (f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification was suspended or revoked during a period of certification, the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .3405 of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Approved by the Supreme Court December 14, 2021.

27 NCAC 01D .3407 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in child welfare law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

Approved by the Supreme Court October 18, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

SECTION .3500 – CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE EMPLOYMENT LAW SPECIALTY

27 NCAC 01D .3501 ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALTY FIELD

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the board) hereby designates Employment Law as a specialty for which certification of specialists under the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) is permitted.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .3502 DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY

The specialty of Employment Law, in general, involves the practice of law as it applies to employers and employees (public and private) and their respective rights and obligations in accordance with myriad federal and state laws. The practice, more specifically, involves the counseling and representation of employers, employees, and independent contractors regarding the evolving array of torts, contractual issues, and federal and North Carolina statutes pertaining to employment relationships, including but not limited to: the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA"); Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; Older Worker Benefits Protection Act; National Labor Relations Act ("NLRA")(insofar as it pertains to "protected concerted" activity and related unfair labor practices); Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA"); Occupational Safety and Health Act ("OSHA")(insofar as it pertains to obligations arising under the "General Duty Clause"); Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act ("WARN"); Pregnancy Discrimination Act; the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act ("USERRA"); Section 1981 of the Civil Rights Act of 1866; the North Carolina Wage and Hour Act ("WHA"), North Carolina Retaliatory Employment Discrimination Act ("REDA"); North Carolina Employment Security law; North Carolina Persons With Disabilities Protection Act; North Carolina State Human Resources Act ("HRA")(insofar as the last pertains to coverage of the HRA and deadlines by which relevant claims must be made); North Carolina law regarding restrictive covenants (non-competition, non-solicitation, and non-disclosure); and related regulations and developing common law. The specialty does not encompass matters arising under the North Carolina Workers' Compensation Act (other than proficient familiarity with the circumstances in which the Act may apply) or the practice of employee benefits law (such as but not limited to federal and North Carolina laws regulating group health insurance plans and tax-qualified retirement plans).

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .3503 RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST IN EMPLOYMENT LAW

If a lawyer qualifies as a specialist in Employment Law by meeting the standards set for the specialty, then the lawyer shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "Board Certified Specialist in Employment Law."

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .3504 APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PLAN OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Certification and continued certification of specialists in Employment Law shall be governed by the provisions of the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization (see Section .1700 of this subchapter) as supplemented by these standards for certification.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01D .3505 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST IN EMPLOYMENT LAW

Each applicant for certification as a specialist in Employment Law shall meet the minimum standards set forth in Rule .1720 of this subchapter. In addition, each applicant shall meet following standards for certification in Employment Law:

(a) Licensure and Practice - An applicant shall be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina as of the date of application. An applicant shall continue to be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina during the period of certification.

(b) Substantial Involvement - An applicant shall affirm to the Board that the applicant has experience through substantial involvement in Employment Law.

(1) Substantial involvement shall mean that, during the 5 years immediately preceding the application, the applicant devoted an average of at least 700 hours a year to the practice of Employment Law but not fewer than 400 hours in any 1 year.

(2) Practice shall mean substantive legal work in Employment Law done primarily for the purpose of providing legal advice or representation, including the activities described in paragraph (3) below, or a practice equivalent as described in paragraph (4) below.

(3) Substantive legal work in Employment Law focuses on the practice of law as it applies to employers and employees and their respective rights and obligations to one another in accordance with myriad federal and state laws. The practice requires proficiency in federal and North Carolina statutes and related regulations, including but not limited to those laws listed above in ".3502 Definition of Specialty" as well as common law pertaining to employer and employee rights.

The specialist must be able to competently advise and represent clients in counseling and before administrative agencies or in court-based litigation (provided, that proficiency in civil litigation is not required); recognize employment laws and spot related issues and risks that are or may be presented by the client's circumstances; know when the laws of states other than those of North Carolina may apply; know when the advice of lawyers who are conversant with other legal fields (such as taxation, business law and professional licensing requirements) may be required; and recognize ethical issues that can arise in the course of relationship with the client.

(4) "Practice equivalent" shall mean: Service as a law professor concentrating in the teaching of Employment Law for up to three years during the five years prior to application may be substituted for an equivalent number of years of experience necessary to meet the five-year requirement set forth in Rule .3505(b)(1).

(c) Continuing Legal Education - To be certified as a specialist in Employment Law, an applicant must have earned no less than 36 hours of accredited continuing legal education credits in Employment Law and related fields during the three years preceding application. The 36 hours must include at least 27 hours in Employment Law; the remaining 9 hours may be in related-field CLE. Related fields include contract law; administrative law; alternative dispute-resolution; workers' compensation law; the law of trade secrets and data privacy; business law/corporate governance law; employment benefits; tax law as regards compensation of employees; employment-related investigations; and civil litigation/trial advocacy. The applicant may request recognition of an additional field as related to Employment Law practice for the purpose of meeting the CLE standard.

(d) Peer Review - An applicant must make a satisfactory showing of qualification through peer review. An applicant must provide the names of 10 lawyers and/or judges who are familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant in the specialty field. Written peer reference forms will be sent by the board or the specialty committee to each of the references. Completed peer reference forms must be received from at least five of the references. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice in North Carolina. An applicant consents to the confidential inquiry by the board or the specialty committee of the submitted references and other persons concerning the applicant's competence and qualification.

(1) A reference may not be related by blood or marriage to the applicant nor may the reference be a partner or associate of the applicant at the time of the application.

(2) The references shall be given on standardized forms provided by the board with the application for certification in the specialty field. These forms shall be returned directly to the specialty committee.

(e) Examination - An applicant must pass a written examination designed to demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skills, and proficiency in the field of Employment Law to justify the representation of special competence to the legal profession and the public.

(1) Terms - The examination shall be in written form and shall be given annually. The examination shall be administered and graded uniformly by the specialty committee.

(2) Subject Matter - The examination shall cover the applicant's knowledge and application of Employment Law as defined and described in "Section .3502 Definition of Specialty", including but not limited to the following:

(A) Fair Labor Standards Act

(B) Family and Medical Leave Act

(C) Americans with Disabilities Act

- (D) Title VII of the Civil Rights Act
- (E) Equal Pay Act
- (F) Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act
- (G) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- (H) Age Discrimination in Employment Act
- (I) Older Workers' Benefits Protection Act
- (J) Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act
- (K) Pregnancy Discrimination Act
- (L) Occupational Safety and Health Act (only as regards scope of "general duty" clause)
- (M) National Labor Relations Act (only as regards employees' right to engage in Section 7 protected "concerted activity" and related unfair labor practices)
- (N) Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
- (O) Section 1981 of the Civil Rights Act of 1866
- (P) North Carolina Retaliatory Employment Discrimination Act
- (Q) North Carolina Wage and Hour Act
- (R) North Carolina statutes and common law regarding restrictive covenants (e.g., non-competition, non-solicitation, and non-disclosure agreements)
- (S) North Carolina Persons With Disabilities Protection Act
- (T) North Carolina State Human Resources Act

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Approved by the Supreme Court March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .3506 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIALIST

The period of certification is five years. Before the expiration of the certification period, a certified specialist who desires continued certification must apply for continued certification within the time limit described in Rule .3506(d) below. No examination will be required for continued certification. However, each applicant for continued certification as a specialist shall comply with the specific requirements set forth below in addition to any general standards required by the board of all applicants for continued certification.

- (a) Substantial Involvement - The specialist must demonstrate that, for each of the five years preceding application for continuing certification, he or she has had substantial involvement in the specialty as defined in Rule .3505(b) of this subchapter.
- (b) Continuing Legal Education - The specialist must earn no less than 60 hours of accredited CLE credits in Employment Law and related fields during the five years preceding application for continuing certification. Of the 60 hours of CLE, at least 42 hours shall be in Employment Law, and the balance of 18 hours may be in related-field CLE (including but not necessarily limited to the related fields set forth in Rule .3505(c) of this subchapter). A list of the topics that qualify as related-field CLE shall be maintained by the board on its official website.
- (c) Peer Review - The applicant must provide, as references, the names of at least six lawyers and/or judges, all of whom are licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in North Carolina. References must be familiar with the competence and qualification of the applicant as a specialist. For an application to be considered, completed peer reference forms must be received from at least three of the references. All other requirements relative to peer review set forth in Rule .3505(d) of this subchapter apply to this standard.
- (d) Time for Application - Application for continued certification shall be made not more than 180 days nor fewer than 90 days before the expiration of the prior period of certification.
- (e) Lapse of Certification - Failure of a specialist to apply for continued certification in a timely fashion will result in a lapse of certification. Following such a lapse, recertification will require compliance with all requirements of Rule .3505 of this subchapter, including the examination.
- (f) Suspension or Revocation of Certification - If an applicant's certification was suspended or revoked during a period of certification, then the application shall be treated as if it were for initial certification under Rule .3505 of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Approved by the Supreme Court March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01D .3507 APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The specific standards set forth herein for certification of specialists in Employment Law are subject to any general requirement, standard, or procedure adopted by the board applicable to all applicants for certification or continued certification.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court March 20, 2024.*

SUBCHAPTER 01E - REGULATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS PRACTICING LAW

SECTION .0100 - REGULATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL CORPORATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES PRACTICING LAW

27 NCAC 01E .0101 AUTHORITY, SCOPE, AND DEFINITIONS

(a) "Authority" Chapter 55B of the General Statutes of North Carolina, being "the Professional Corporation Act," particularly Section 55B-12, and Chapter 57D, being the "North Carolina Limited Liability Company Act," particularly Section 57D-2-02, authorizes the Council of the North Carolina State Bar (the council) to adopt regulations for professional corporations and professional limited liability companies practicing law. These regulations are adopted by the council pursuant to that authority.

(b) "Statutory Law" These regulations only supplement the basic statutory law governing professional corporations (Chapter 55B) and professional limited liability companies (Chapter 57D) and shall be interpreted in harmony with those statutes and with other statutes and laws governing corporations and limited liability companies generally.

(c) "Definitions" All terms used in these regulations shall have the meanings set forth below or shall be as defined in the Professional Corporation Act or the North Carolina Limited Liability Company Act as appropriate.

- (1) "Council" shall mean the Council of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (2) "Licensee" shall mean any natural person who is duly licensed to practice law in North Carolina.
- (3) "Professional limited liability company or companies" shall mean any professional limited liability company or companies organized for the purpose of practicing law in North Carolina.
- (4) "Professional corporations" shall mean any professional corporation or corporations organized for the purpose of practicing law in North Carolina.
- (5) "Secretary" shall mean the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. April 1, 2026.*

27 NCAC 01E .0102 NAME OF PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION OR PROFESSIONAL LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

(a) "Name of Professional Corporation" The name of every professional corporation shall contain the surname of one or more of its shareholders or of one or more persons who were associated with its immediate corporate, individual, partnership, or professional limited liability company predecessor in the practice of law and shall not contain any other name, word, or character (other than punctuation marks and conjunctions) except as required or permitted by Rules .0102(a)(1), (2) and (5) in this Rule. The following additional requirements shall apply to the name of a professional corporation:

- (1) "Corporate Designation" The name of a professional corporation shall end with the following words:
 - (A) "Professional Association" or the abbreviation "P.A."; or
 - (B) "Professional Corporation" or the abbreviation "P.C."
- (2) "Deceased or Retired Shareholder" The surname of any shareholder of a professional corporation may be retained in the corporate name after such person's death, retirement or inactivity due to age or disability, even though such person may have disposed of his or her shares of stock in the professional corporation;
- (3) "Disqualified Shareholder" If a shareholder in a professional corporation whose surname appears in the corporate name becomes legally disqualified to render professional services in North Carolina or, if the shareholder is not licensed in North Carolina, in any other jurisdiction in which the shareholder is licensed, the name of the professional corporation shall be promptly changed to eliminate the name of such shareholder, and such shareholder shall promptly dispose of his or her shares of stock in the corporation;

- (4) "Shareholder Becomes Judge or Official" If a shareholder in a professional corporation whose surname appears in the corporate name becomes a judge or other adjudicatory officer or holds any other office which disqualifies such shareholder to practice law, the name of the professional corporation shall be promptly changed to eliminate the name of such shareholder and such person shall promptly dispose of his or her shares of stock in the corporation;
 - (5) "Trade Name Allowed" A professional corporation shall not use any name other than its corporate name, except to the extent a trade name or other name is required or permitted by statute, rule of court or the Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (b) "Name of Professional Limited Liability Company" The name of every professional limited liability company shall contain the surname of one or more of its members or one or more persons who were associated with its immediate corporate, individual, partnership, or professional limited liability company predecessor in the practice of law and shall not contain any other name, word or character (other than punctuation marks and conjunctions) except as required or permitted by Rules .0102(b)(1), (2) and (5) below. The following requirements shall apply to the name of a professional limited liability company:
- (1) "Professional Limited Liability Company Designation" The name of a professional limited liability company shall end with the words "Professional Limited Liability Company" or the abbreviations "P.L.L.C." or "PLLC";
 - (2) "Deceased or Retired Member" The surname of any member of a professional limited liability company may be retained in the limited liability company name after such person's death, retirement, or inactivity due to age or disability, even though such person may have disposed of his or her interest in the professional limited liability company;
 - (3) "Disqualified Member" If a member of a professional limited liability company whose surname appears in the name of such professional limited liability company becomes legally disqualified to render professional services in North Carolina or, if the member is not licensed in North Carolina, in any other jurisdiction in which the member is licensed, the name of the professional limited liability company shall be promptly changed to eliminate the name of such member, and such member shall promptly dispose of his or her interest in the professional limited liability company;
 - (4) "Member Becomes Judge or Official" If a member of a professional limited liability company whose surname appears in the professional limited liability company name becomes a judge or other adjudicatory official or holds any other office which disqualifies such person to practice law, the name of the professional limited liability company shall be promptly changed to eliminate the name of such member and such person shall promptly dispose of his or her interest in the professional limited liability company;
 - (5) "Trade Name Allowed" A professional limited liability company shall not use any name other than its limited liability company name, except to the extent a trade name or other name is required or permitted by statute, rule of court, or the Rules of Professional Conduct.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amended Eff. March 6, 1997.*

27 NCAC 01E .0103 REGISTRATION WITH THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR

- (a) Registration of Professional Corporation - At least one of the incorporators of a professional corporation shall be an attorney at law duly licensed to practice in North Carolina. The incorporators shall comply with the following requirements for registration of a professional corporation with the North Carolina State Bar:
- (1) Filing with State Bar - Prior to filing the articles of incorporation with the secretary of state, the incorporators of a professional corporation shall file the following with the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar:
 - (A) the original articles of incorporation;
 - (B) an additional executed copy of the articles of incorporation;
 - (C) a conformed copy of the articles of incorporation;
 - (D) a registration fee of fifty dollars;
 - (E) an application for certificate of registration for a professional corporation (Form PC-1; see Section .0106(a) of this subchapter) verified by all incorporators, setting forth
 - (i) the name and address of each person who will be an original shareholder or an employee who will practice law for the corporation in North Carolina;

- (ii) the name and address of at least one person who is an incorporator;
 - (iii) the name and address of at least one person who will be an original director; and
 - (iv) the name and address of at least one person who will be an original officer, and stating that all such persons are duly licensed to practice law in North Carolina. The application shall also
 - (a) set forth the name, address, and license information of each original shareholder who is not licensed to practice law in North Carolina but who shall perform services on behalf of the corporation in another jurisdiction in which the corporation maintains an office; and
 - (b) certify that all such persons are duly licensed to practice law in the appropriate jurisdiction. The application shall include a representation that the corporation will be conducted in compliance with the Professional Corporation Act and these regulations; and
- (F) a certification for professional corporation by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar (Form PC-2; see Rule .0106(b) of this subchapter), a copy of which shall be attached to the original, the executed copy, and the conformed copy of the articles of incorporation, to be executed by the secretary in accordance with Rule .0103(a)(2) below.
- (2) Certificates Issued by Secretary and Council - The secretary shall review the articles of incorporation for compliance with the laws relating to professional corporations and these regulations. If the secretary determines that all persons who will be original shareholders are active members in good standing with the North Carolina State Bar, or duly licensed to practice law in another jurisdiction in which the corporation shall maintain an office, and that the articles of incorporation conform with the laws relating to professional corporations and these regulations, the secretary shall take the following actions:
- (A) execute the certification for professional corporation by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar (Form PC-2; see Rule .0106(b) of this subchapter) attached to the original, the executed copy, and the conformed copy of the articles of incorporation and return the original and the conformed copies of the articles of incorporation, together with the attached certificates, to the incorporators for filing with the secretary of state;
 - (B) retain the executed copy of the articles of incorporation together with the application (Form PC-1) and the certification of council (Form PC-2) in the office of the North Carolina State Bar as a permanent record;
 - (C) issue a certificate of registration for a professional corporation (Form PC-3; see Rule .0106(c) of this subchapter) to the professional corporation to become effective upon the effective date of the articles of incorporation after said articles are filed with the secretary of state.
- (b) Registration of a Professional Limited Liability Company - At least one of the persons executing the articles of organization of a professional limited liability company shall be an attorney at law duly licensed to practice law in North Carolina. The persons executing the articles of organization shall comply with the following requirements for registration with the North Carolina State Bar:
- (1) Filing with State Bar - Prior to filing the articles of organization with the secretary of state, the persons executing the articles of organization of a professional limited liability company shall file the following with the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar:
 - (A) the original articles of organization;
 - (B) an additional executed copy of the articles of organization;
 - (C) a conformed copy of the articles of organization;
 - (D) a registration fee of \$50;
 - (E) an application for certificate of registration for a professional limited liability company (Form PLLC-1; see Rule .0106(f) of this subchapter) verified by all of the persons executing the articles of organization, setting forth
 - (i) the name and address of each original member or employee who will practice law for the professional limited liability company in North Carolina;
 - (ii) the name and address of at least one person executing the articles of organization; and
 - (iii) the name and address of at least one person who will be an original manager, and stating that all such persons are duly licensed to practice law in North Carolina. The application shall also

- (a) set forth the name, address, and license information of each original member who is not licensed to practice law in North Carolina but who shall perform services on behalf of the professional limited liability company in another jurisdiction in which the professional limited liability company maintains an office; and
 - (b) certify that all such persons are duly licensed to practice law in the appropriate jurisdiction. The application shall include a representation that the professional limited liability company will be conducted in compliance with the North Carolina Limited Liability Company Act and these regulations;
 - (F) a certification for professional limited liability company by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar, (Form PLLC-2; see Rule .0106(g) of this subchapter), a copy of which shall be attached to the original, the executed copy, and the conformed copy of the articles of organization, to be executed by the secretary in accordance with Rule .0103(b)(2) below.
 - (2) Certificates Issued by the Secretary - The secretary shall review the articles of organization for compliance with the laws relating to professional limited liability companies and these regulations. If the secretary determines that all of the persons who will be original members are active members in good standing with the North Carolina State Bar, or duly licensed in another jurisdiction in which the professional limited liability company shall maintain an office, and the articles of organization conform with the laws relating to professional limited liability companies and these regulations, the secretary shall take the following actions:
 - (A) execute the certification for professional limited liability company by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar (Form PLLC-2) attached to the original, the executed copy and the conformed copy of the articles of organization and return the original and the conformed copy of the articles of organization, together with the attached certificates, to the persons executing the articles of organization for filing with the secretary of state;
 - (B) retain the executed copy of the articles of organization together with the application (Form PLLC-1) and the certification (Form PLLC-2) in the office of the North Carolina State Bar as a permanent record;
 - (C) issue a certificate of registration for a professional limited liability company (Form PLLC-3; see Rule .0106(h) of this subchapter) to the professional limited liability company to become effective upon the effective date of the articles of organization after said articles are filed with the secretary of state.
- (c) Refund of Registration Fee - If the secretary is unable to make the findings required by Rules .0103(a)(2) or .0103(b)(2) above, the secretary shall refund the \$50 registration fee.
- (d) Expiration of Certificate of Registration - The initial certificate of registration for either a professional corporation or a professional limited liability company shall remain effective through June 30 following the date of registration.
- (e) Renewal of Certificate of Registration - The certificate of registration for either a professional corporation or a professional limited liability company shall be renewed on or before July 1 of each year upon the following conditions:
- (1) Renewal of Certificate of Registration for Professional Corporation - A professional corporation shall submit an application for renewal of certificate of registration for a professional corporation (Form PC-4; see Rule .0106(d) of this subchapter) to the secretary listing the names and addresses of all of the shareholders and employees of the corporation who practice law for the professional corporation in North Carolina and the name and address of at least one officer and one director of the professional corporation, and certifying that all such persons are duly licensed to practice law in the state of North Carolina and representing that the corporation has complied with these regulations and the provisions of the Professional Corporation Act. Such application shall also
 - (i) set forth the name, address, and license information of each shareholder who is not licensed to practice law in North Carolina but who performs services on behalf of the corporation in another jurisdiction in which the corporation maintains an office; and
 - (ii) certify that all such persons are duly licensed to practice law in the appropriate jurisdiction. Upon a finding by the secretary that all shareholders are active members in good standing with the North Carolina State Bar, or are duly licensed to practice law in another jurisdiction in which the corporation maintains an office, the secretary shall renew the certificate of registration by making a notation in the records of the North Carolina State Bar;

- (2) Renewal of Certificate of Registration for a Professional Limited Liability Company - A professional limited liability company shall submit an application for renewal of certificate of registration for a professional limited liability company (Form PLLC-4; see Rule .0106(i) of this subchapter) to the secretary listing the names and addresses of all of the members and employees of the professional limited liability company who practice law in North Carolina, and the name and address of at least one manager, and certifying that all such persons are duly licensed to practice law in the state of North Carolina, and representing that the professional limited liability company has complied with these regulations and the provisions of the North Carolina Limited Liability Company Act. Such application shall also
 - (i) set forth the name, address, and license information of each member who is not licensed to practice law in North Carolina but who performs services on behalf of the professional limited liability company in another jurisdiction in which the professional limited liability company maintains an office; and
 - (ii) certify that all such persons are duly licensed to practice law in the appropriate jurisdiction. Upon a finding by the secretary that all members are active members in good standing with the North Carolina State Bar, or are duly licensed to practice law in another jurisdiction in which the professional limited liability company maintains an office, the secretary shall renew the certificate of registration by making a notation in the records of the North Carolina State Bar;
- (3) Renewal Fee - An application for renewal of a certificate of registration for either a professional corporation or a professional limited liability company shall be accompanied by a renewal fee of \$25;
- (4) Refund of Renewal Fee - If the secretary is unable to make the findings required by Rules .0103(e)(1) or .0103(e)(2) above, the secretary shall refund the \$25 registration fee;
- (5) Failure to Apply for Renewal of Certificate of Registration - In the event a professional corporation or a professional limited liability company shall fail to submit the appropriate application for renewal of certificate of registration, together with the renewal fee, to the North Carolina State Bar within 30 days following the expiration date of its certificate of registration, the certificate of registration for the delinquent professional corporation or professional limited liability company shall be suspended and the secretary of state will be notified of the suspension of said certificate of registration;
- (6) Reinstatement of Suspended Certificate of Registration - Upon (a) the submission to the North Carolina State Bar of the appropriate application for renewal of certificate of registration, together with all past due renewal fees and late fees; and (b) a finding by the secretary that the representations in the application are correct, a suspended certificate of registration of a professional corporation or professional limited liability company shall be reinstated by the secretary by making a notation in the records of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (7) Inactive Status Pending Dissolution - If a professional corporation or professional limited liability company notifies the State Bar in writing or, in response to a notice to show cause issued pursuant to Rule .0103(e)(5) of this subchapter, a delinquent professional corporation or professional limited liability company shows that the organization is no longer practicing law and is winding down the operations and financial activities of the organization, no renewal fee or late fee shall be owed and the organization shall be moved to inactive status for a period of not more than one year. If, at the end of that period, a copy of the articles of dissolution has not been filed with the State Bar, the secretary of the State Bar shall send a notice to show cause letter and shall pursue suspension of the certificate of registration as set forth in Rule .0103(e)(5) of this subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
 Amended Eff. March 6, 1997;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 16, 2017; October 1, 2003.

27 NCAC 01E .0104 MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

- (a) "Management" At least one director and one officer of a professional corporation and at least one manager of a professional limited liability company shall be active members in good standing with the North Carolina State Bar.
- (b) "Authority Over Professional Matters:" No person affiliated with a professional corporation or a professional limited liability company, other than a licensee, shall exercise any authority whatsoever over the rendering of professional services in North Carolina or in matters of North Carolina law.

- (c) "No Income to Disqualified Person" The income of a professional corporation or of a professional limited liability company attributable to the practice of law during the time that a shareholder of the professional corporation or a member of a professional limited liability company is legally disqualified to render professional services in North Carolina or, if the shareholder or member is not licensed in North Carolina, in any other jurisdiction in which the shareholder or member is licensed or after a shareholder or a member becomes a judge, other adjudicatory officer, or the holder of any other office, as specified in Rule .0102(a)(4) or .0102(b)(4) of this subchapter, shall not in any manner accrue to the benefit of such shareholder, or his or her shares, or to such member.
- (d) "Stock of a Professional Corporation" A professional corporation may acquire and hold its own stock.
- (e) "Acquisition of Shares of Deceased or Disqualified Shareholder" Subject to the provisions of G.S. 55B-7, a professional corporation may make such agreement with its shareholders or its shareholders may make such agreement between themselves as they may deem just for the acquisition of the shares of a deceased or retiring shareholder or a shareholder who becomes disqualified to own shares under the Professional Corporation Act or under these regulations.
- (f) "Stock Certificate Legend" There shall be prominently displayed on the face of all certificates of stock in a professional corporation a legend that any transfer of the shares represented by such certificate is subject to the provisions of the Professional Corporation Act and these regulations.
- (g) "Transfer of Stock of Professional Corporation" When stock of a professional corporation is transferred to a licensee, the professional corporation shall request that the secretary issue a stock transfer certificate (Form PC-5; see Rule .0106(e) of this subchapter) as required by G.S. 55B-6. The secretary is authorized to issue the certificate which shall be permanently attached to the stub of the transferee's stock certificate in the stock register of the professional corporation. The fee for such certificate shall be in an amount determined by the council and shall be charged for each transferee listed on the stock transfer certificate.
- (h) "Stock Register of Professional Corporation" The stock register of a professional corporation shall be kept at the principal office of the corporation and shall be subject to inspection by the secretary or his or her delegate during business hours at the principal office of the corporation.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 6, 1997; September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0105 GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

- (a) "Administration of Regulations" These regulations shall be administered by the secretary, subject to the review and supervision of the council. The council may from time to time appoint such standing or special committees as it may deem proper to deal with any matter affecting the administration of these regulations. It shall be the duty of the secretary to bring to the attention of the council or its appropriate committee any violation of the law or of these regulations.
- (b) "Appeal to Council" If the secretary shall decline to execute any certificate required by Rule .0103(a)(2), Rule .0103(b)(2), or Rule .0104(g) of this subchapter, or to renew the same when properly requested, or shall refuse to take any other action requested in writing by a professional corporation or a professional limited liability company, the aggrieved party may request in writing that the council review such action. Upon receipt of such a request, the council shall provide a formal hearing for the aggrieved party through a committee of its members.
- (c) "Articles of Amendment, Merger, and Dissolution" A copy of the following documents, duly certified by the secretary of state, shall be filed with the secretary within 10 days after filing with the secretary of state:
- (1) all amendments to the articles of incorporation of a professional corporation or to the articles of organization of a professional limited liability company;
 - (2) all articles of merger to which a professional corporation or a professional limited liability company is a party;
 - (3) all articles of dissolution dissolving a professional corporation or a professional limited liability company;
 - (4) any other documents filed with the secretary of state changing the corporate structure of a professional corporation or the organizational structure of a professional limited liability company.
- (d) "Filing Fee" Except as otherwise provided in these regulations, all reports or papers required by law or by these regulations to be filed with the secretary shall be accompanied by a filing fee in an amount determined by the council.
- (e) "Accounting for Filing Fees" All fees provided for in these regulations shall be the property of the North Carolina State Bar and shall be deposited by the secretary to its account, and such account shall be separately stated on all financial reports made by the secretary to the council and on all financial reports made by the council.
- (f) "Records of State Bar" The secretary shall keep a file for each professional corporation and each professional limited liability company which shall contain the executed articles of incorporation or organization, all amendments thereto, and all other documents relating to the affairs of the corporation or professional limited liability company.

(g) "Additional Information" A professional corporation or a professional limited liability corporation shall furnish to the secretary such information and documents relating to the administration of these regulations as the secretary or the council may reasonably request.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. September 25, 2020.*

27 NCAC 01E .0106 FORMS

(a) "Form PC" 1:

Application for Certificate of Registration for a Professional Corporation

The undersigned, being all of the incorporators of _____, a professional corporation to be incorporated under the laws of the state of North Carolina for the purpose of practicing law, hereby certify to the Council of the North Carolina State Bar:

1. At least one person who is an incorporator, at least one person who will be an original officer, and at least one person who will be an original director, and all persons who, to the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned, will be original shareholders and employees who will practice law for said professional corporation are duly licensed to practice law in the state of North Carolina. The names and addresses of such persons are:

Name and Position

Address

(incorporator, officer, director, shareholder, employee)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Each original shareholder who is not licensed to practice law in North Carolina but who will perform services on behalf of the corporation in another jurisdiction in which the corporation maintains an office is duly licensed to practice law in that jurisdiction. The name, address, and license information of each such person are:

Name, Address, Jurisdiction of Licensure, License Number

3. The jurisdictions other than North Carolina in which the corporation will maintain an office are:

Name of Jurisdiction and Address of Office(s)

4. The undersigned represent that the professional corporation will be conducted in compliance with the Professional Corporations Act and with the North Carolina State Bar's Regulations for Professional Corporations and Professional Limited Liability Companies Practicing Law.

5. Application is hereby made for a Certificate of Registration to be effective upon the effective date of the professional corporation's articles of incorporation after said articles are filed with the secretary of state.

6. Attached hereto is the registration fee of \$50.

This the _____ day of _____, 19____.

Incorporator

Incorporator

Incorporator

[Signatures of all incorporators.]

NORTH CAROLINA

_____ COUNTY

I hereby certify that _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____, being all of the incorporators of _____, a professional corporation, personally appeared before me this day and stated that they have read the foregoing Application for Certificate of Registration for a Professional Corporation and that the statements contained therein are true.

Witness my hand and notarial seal, this _____ day of _____, 19____.

Notary Public

My commission expires:

(b) Form PC" 2:

Certification for Professional Corporation by Council of the North Carolina State Bar

The incorporators of _____, a professional corporation, have certified to the Council of the North Carolina State Bar the names and addresses of all persons who will be original owners of said professional corporation's shares.

Based upon that certification and my examination of the roll of attorneys licensed to practice law in the state of North Carolina, I hereby certify that the ownership of the shares of stock is in compliance with the requirements of G.S. 55B-4(2) and G.S. 55B-6.

This certificate is executed under the authority of the Council of the North Carolina State Bar, this _____ day of _____, 19____.

Secretary of the North Carolina State Bar

[This certificate is required by G.S. 55B-4(4) and must be attached to the original articles of incorporation when filed with the secretary of state. See Rule .0103(a)(2) of this subchapter.]

(c) Form PC" 3:

Certificate of Registration for a Professional Corporation

It appears that _____, a professional corporation, has met all of the requirements of G.S. 55B-4, G.S. 55B-6 and the Regulations for Professional Corporations and Professional Limited Liability Companies Practicing Law of the North Carolina State Bar.

By the authority of the Council of the North Carolina State Bar, I hereby issue this Certificate of Registration for a Professional Corporation pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 55B-10 and the North Carolina State Bar's Regulations for Professional Corporations and Professional Limited Liability Companies Practicing Law.

This registration is effective upon the effective date of the articles of incorporation of said professional corporation, after said articles are filed with the secretary of state, and expires on June 30, 19____.

This the _____ day of _____, 19____.

Secretary of the North Carolina State Bar

(d) Form PC" 4:

Application for Renewal of Certificate of Registration for Professional Corporation

Application is hereby made for renewal of the Certificate of Registration for Professional Corporation of _____, a professional corporation.

In support of this application, the undersigned hereby certify to the Council of the North Carolina State Bar:

1. At least one of the officers and one of the directors, and all of the shareholders and employees of said professional corporation who practice law for said professional corporation in North Carolina are duly licensed to practice law in the state of North Carolina. The names and addresses of such persons are:

Name and Position	Address
(incorporator, officer, director, shareholder, employee)	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Each shareholder who is not licensed to practice law in North Carolina but who performs services on behalf of the corporation in another jurisdiction in which the corporation maintains an office is duly licensed to practice law in that jurisdiction. The name, address, and license information of each such person are:

Name, Address, Jurisdiction of Licensure, License Number

3. The jurisdictions other than North Carolina in which the corporation maintains an office are:

Name of Jurisdiction and Address of Office(s)

4. At all times since the issuance of its Certificate of Registration for Professional Corporation, said professional corporation has complied with the North Carolina State Bar's Regulations for Professional Corporations and Professional Limited Liability Companies Practicing Law and with the Professional Corporations Act.

5. Attached hereto is the renewal fee of \$25.

This the _____ day of _____, 19____.

(Professional Corporation)

By: _____
President (or Chief Executive)

NORTH CAROLINA

_____ COUNTY

I hereby certify that _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____, being all of the incorporators of _____, a professional corporation, personally appeared before me this day and stated that they have read the foregoing Application for Certificate of Registration for a Professional Corporation and that the statements contained therein are true.

Witness my hand and notarial seal, this _____ day of _____, 19 ____.

Notary Public

My commission expires:

(e) Form PC" 5:

North Carolina State Bar Stock Transfer Certificate

I hereby certify that _____ (transferee) is duly licensed to practice law in the State of North Carolina and as of this date may be a transferee of shares of stock in a professional corporation formed to practice law in the state of North Carolina.

This certificate is executed under the authority of the Council of the North Carolina State Bar, this _____ day of _____, 19_____.

Secretary of the North Carolina State Bar

[This certificate is required by G.S. 55B-6 and must be attached to the transferee's stock certificate. See Rule .0104(g) of this subchapter.]

(f) Form PLLC" 1:

Application for Certificate of Registration for a Professional Limited Liability Company

The undersigned, being all of the persons executing the articles of organization of _____, a professional limited liability company to be organized under the laws of the state of North Carolina for the purpose of practicing law, hereby certify to the Council of the North Carolina State Bar:

1. At least one person executing the articles of organization, at least one person who will be an original manager, and all persons who, to the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned, will be original members and employees who will practice law for said professional limited liability company in North Carolina are duly licensed to practice law in the state of North Carolina. The names and addresses of all such persons are:

Name and Position Address

(signer of articles, manager, member, employee)

2. Each original member who is not licensed to practice law in North Carolina but who will perform services on behalf of the professional limited liability company in another jurisdiction in which the professional limited liability company maintains an office is duly licensed to practice law in that jurisdiction. The names, addresses, and license information of each such person are:

Name, Address, Jurisdiction of Licensure, License Number

3. The jurisdictions other than North Carolina in which the professional limited liability company will maintain an office are:

Name of Jurisdiction and Address of Office(s)

4. The undersigned represent that the professional limited liability company will be conducted in compliance with the North Carolina Limited Liability Company Act and with the North Carolina state Bar's Regulations for Professional Corporations and Professional Limited Liability Companies Practicing Law.

5. Application is hereby made for a Certificate of Registration to be effective upon the effective date of the professional limited liability company's articles of organization after said articles are filed with the secretary of state.

6. Attached hereto is the registration fee of \$50.

This the _____ day of _____, 19____.

(Signatures of all persons executing articles of organization.)

NORTH CAROLINA

_____ COUNTY

I hereby certify that _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____, being all of the incorporators of _____, a professional corporation, personally appeared before me this day and stated that they have read the foregoing Application for Certificate of Registration for a Professional Corporation and that the statements contained therein are true.

Witness my hand and notarial seal, this _____ day of _____, 19____.

Notary Public

My commission expires:

(g) Form PLLC" 2:

Certification for Professional Limited Liability Company by Council of the North Carolina State Bar

All of the persons executing the articles of organization of _____, a professional limited liability company, have certified to the Council of the North Carolina State Bar the names and addresses of all persons who will be original members of said professional limited liability company.

Based upon that certification and my examination of the roll of attorneys licensed to practice law in the state of North Carolina, I hereby certify that the membership interest is in compliance with the requirements of G.S. 55C-2-01(c), and, by reference, G.S. 55B-4(2) and G.S. 55B-6.

This certificate is executed under the authority of the Council of the North Carolina State Bar, this _____ day of _____, 19____.

Secretary of the North Carolina State Bar

[This certificate is required by G.S. 55B-4(4) and G.S. 57C-2-01 and must be attached to the original articles of organization when filed with the secretary of state. See Rule .0103(b)(2) of this subchapter.]

(h) Form PLLC" 3:

Certificate of Registration for a Professional Limited Liability Company

It appears that _____, a professional limited liability company, has met all of the requirements of G.S. 57C-2-01 and the North Carolina State Bar's Regulations for Professional Corporations and Professional Limited Liability Companies Practicing Law.

By the authority of the Council of the North Carolina State Bar, I hereby issue this Certificate of Registration for a Professional Limited Liability Company pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 55B-10, G.S. 57C-2-01 and the North Carolina State Bar's Regulations for Professional Corporations and Professional Limited Liability Companies Practicing Law.

This registration is effective upon the effective date of the articles of organization of said professional limited liability company, after said articles are filed with the secretary of state, and expires on June 30, 19____.

This the _____ day of _____, 19____.

Secretary of the North Carolina State Bar

(i) Form PLLC" 4:

Application for Renewal of Certificate of Registration for Professional Limited Liability Company

Application is hereby made for renewal of the Certificate of Registration for Professional Limited Liability Company of _____, a professional limited liability company.

In support of this application, the undersigned hereby certify to the Council of the North Carolina State Bar:

1. At least one of the managers, and all of the members and employees of said professional limited liability company who practice law for said professional limited liability company in North Carolina are duly licensed to practice law in the State of North Carolina. The names and addresses of all such persons are:

Name and Position

Address

(manager, member, employee)

2. Each member who is not licensed to practice law in North Carolina but who performs services on behalf of the professional limited liability company in another jurisdiction in which the professional limited liability company maintains an office is duly licensed to practice law in that jurisdiction. The names, addresses, and license information of each such person are:

Name, Address, Jurisdiction of Licensure, License Number

3. The jurisdictions other than North Carolina in which the professional limited liability company maintains an office are:

Name of Jurisdiction and Address of Office(s)

4. At all times since the issuance of its Certificate of Registration for Professional Limited Liability Company, said professional limited liability company has complied with the North Carolina State Bar's Regulations for Professional Corporations and Professional Limited Liability Companies Practicing Law and with the provisions of the North Carolina Limited Liability Company Act.

5. Attached hereto is the renewal fee of \$25.

This the _____ day of _____, 19____.

(Professional Limited Liability Company)

NORTH CAROLINA

_____ COUNTY

I hereby certify that _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____, being all of the incorporators of _____, a professional corporation, personally appeared before me this day and stated that they have read the foregoing Application for Certificate of Registration for a Professional Corporation and that the statements contained therein are true.

Witness my hand and notarial seal, this _____ day of _____, 19____.

Notary Public

My commission expires:

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 6, 1997.*

SECTION .0200 – REGISTRATION OF INTERSTATE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW FIRMS

27 NCAC 01E .0201 REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT

No law firm or professional organization that (1) maintains offices in North Carolina and one or more other jurisdictions, or (2) files for a certificate of authority to transact business in North Carolina from the North Carolina Secretary of State, may do business in North Carolina without first obtaining a certificate of registration from the North Carolina State Bar provided, however, that no law firm or professional organization shall be required to obtain a certificate of registration if all attorneys associated with the law firm or professional organization, or any law firm or professional organization that is in partnership with said law firm or professional organization, are licensed to practice law in North Carolina.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. March 6, 2014; March 5, 1998.*

27 NCAC 01E .0202 CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

The secretary of the North Carolina State Bar shall issue such a certificate upon satisfaction of the following conditions precedent:

- (1) There shall be filed with the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar a registration statement disclosing:
 - (a) all names used to identify the filing law firm or professional organization;
 - (b) addresses of all offices maintained by the filing law firm or professional organization;
 - (c) the name and address of any law firm or professional organization with which the filing law firm or professional organization is in partnership and the name and address of such partnership;
 - (d) the name and address of each attorney who is a partner, shareholder, member or employee of the filing law firm or professional organization or who is a partner, shareholder, member or employee of a law firm or professional organization with which the filing law firm or professional organization is in partnership;
 - (e) the relationship of each attorney identified in Rule .0202(1)(d) of this Rule to the filing law firm or professional organization;
 - (f) the states to which each attorney identified in Rule .0202(1)(d) of this Rule is admitted to practice law.
- (2) There shall be filed with the registration statement a notarized statement of the filing law firm or professional organization by a member who is licensed in North Carolina certifying that each attorney identified in Rule .0202(1)(d) of this Rule who is not licensed to practice law in North Carolina is a member in good standing of each state bar to which the attorney has been admitted.
- (3) There shall be filed with the registration statement a notarized statement of the filing law firm or professional organization affirming that each attorney identified in Rule .0202(1)(d) above who is not licensed to practice law in North Carolina will govern his or her personal and professional conduct with respect to legal matters arising from North Carolina in accordance with the Rules of Professional Conduct of the North Carolina State Bar.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01E .0203 REGISTRATION FEE

There shall be submitted with each registration statement and supporting documentation a registration fee as an administrative cost which shall be in an amount determined by the council.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amended Eff. September 25, 2020.*

27 NCAC 01E .0204 CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

A certificate of registration shall remain effective until January 1 following the date of filing and may be renewed annually by the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar upon the filing of an updated registration statement which satisfies the requirements set forth above and the submission of the registration fee.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01E .0205 EFFECT OF REGISTRATION

This Rule shall not be construed to confer the right to practice law in North Carolina upon any lawyer not licensed to practice law in North Carolina.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-16; 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01E .0206 NON-RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION

If a law firm or professional organization registered under these rules no longer meets the criteria for registration, it shall notify the State Bar in writing. If such written notice is not received by the State Bar on or before December 31 of the year in which registration is no longer required, the registration fee for the next calendar year, as set forth in Rule .0203 of this Subchapter, shall be owed.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 1, 2003.*

SECTION .0300 - RULES CONCERNING PREPAID LEGAL SERVICES PLANS

27 NCAC 01E .0301 DEFINITIONS

The following words and phrases when used in this subchapter shall have the meanings given to them in this rule:

- (a) Counsel – the counsel of the North Carolina State Bar appointed by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (b) Plan Owner – the person or entity not authorized to engage in the practice of law that operates or is seeking to operate a plan in accordance with these Rules.
- (c) Prepaid Legal Services Plan or Plan – any arrangement by which a person or entity, not authorized to engage in the practice of law, in exchange for any valuable consideration, offers to arrange the provision of specified legal services that are paid for in advance of any immediate need for the specified legal services ("covered services"). The North Carolina legal services arranged by a plan must be provided by a North Carolina licensed attorney who is not an employee, director, or owner of the plan. A plan does not include the sale of an identified, limited legal service, such as drafting a will, for a fixed, one-time fee.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Approved by the Supreme Court: February 5, 2002;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007; September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0303 on September 25, 2020;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court March 1, 2023 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.*

27 NCAC 01E .0302 STATE BAR JURISDICTION

The North Carolina State Bar retains jurisdiction over North Carolina licensed attorneys who participate in plans, whose conduct is subject to the rules and regulations of the State Bar.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Readopted Eff. Dec 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007; September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0311 on September 25, 2020.*

27 NCAC 01E .0303 ROLE OF AUTHORIZED PRACTICE COMMITTEE

The Authorized Practice Committee ("committee"), as a duly authorized standing committee of the North Carolina State Bar Council, shall oversee the registration of plans in accordance with these rules. The committee shall also establish reasonable deadlines, rules and procedures regarding the initial and annual registrations, amendments to registrations, and the revocation of registrations of plans.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Readopted Eff. Dec 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007; October 7, 2010; September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0304(c) on September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0304 INDEX OF REGISTERED PLANS

The North Carolina State Bar shall maintain an index of the plans registered pursuant to these rules. All documents filed pursuant to these rules shall be available for public inspection during regular business hours.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Readopted Eff. Dec 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007; September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0309 on September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0305 REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT

A plan shall be registered with the North Carolina State Bar before operating in North Carolina. Registration shall be evidenced by a certificate of registration issued by the State Bar. No plan may operate in any manner that violates the North Carolina statutes regarding the unauthorized practice of law. No plan may operate in North Carolina unless at least one licensed North Carolina attorney has agreed to provide the legal services arranged by the plan at all times during the operation of the plan. No licensed North Carolina attorney shall participate in a plan in this state unless the plan has registered with the State Bar and has complied with the rules set forth below.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007; September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0302 on September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0306 REGISTRATION FEES

The initial and annual registration fees for each plan shall be determined by the council and shall be non-refundable.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Readopted Eff. Dec 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007; March 8, 2012; September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0308 on September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0307 REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

To register a plan, the plan owner shall complete the initial registration statement form contained in Rule .0310 and file it with the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Readopted Eff. Dec 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007; October 7, 2010; September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0304(a) on September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0308 INITIAL REGISTRATION DETERMINATION

Counsel shall review the plan's initial registration statement. If the plan satisfies the requirements for registration, the secretary shall issue a certificate of registration to the plan owner. If the plan does not satisfy the requirements for registration, counsel shall inform the plan owner that the plan will not be registered and shall explain the deficiencies. Upon notice that the plan will not be registered, the plan owner may resubmit one amended initial registration statement or request a hearing before the

committee pursuant to Rule .0317 below. Counsel shall provide a report to the committee each quarter identifying the plans that submitted initial registration statements and whether each plan was registered.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Adopted by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: October 7, 2010; September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0305 on September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0309 REGISTRATION DOES NOT CONSTITUTE APPROVAL

The registration of any plan under these rules shall not be construed to indicate approval, disapproval, or an endorsement of the plan by the North Carolina State Bar. Any plan that advertises or otherwise represents that it is registered with the State Bar shall include a clear and conspicuous statement within the advertisement or communication that registration with the State Bar does not constitute approval or an endorsement of the plan by the State Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Readopted Eff. Dec 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: February 5, 2002; August 23, 2007; September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0301 and .0310 on September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0310 INITIAL REGISTRATION STATEMENT FORM

Initial Registration Statement Form for Prepaid Legal Services Plan

Any person or entity seeking to operate a prepaid legal services plan shall register the plan with the North Carolina State Bar on the initial registration statement form provided by the State Bar. Each plan must be registered prior to its operation in North Carolina.

The plan owner shall complete this form and file it with the secretary of the State Bar. The plan owner must provide complete responses to each of the following items. The plan will not be registered if any item is left incomplete.

1. Name of Plan:

- a. Owner of Plan
 - i. Name:
 - ii. Title:

2. Principal North Carolina Address for Plan:

- a. Address:
- b. City:
- c. State:
- d. Zip Code:

3. Contact Information for Plan Representative

- a. Name:
- b. Address:
- c. City:
- d. State:
- e. Zip Code:
- f. Telephone Number:
- g. Email Address:

4. Is the plan offered by a person or entity not authorized to engage in the practice of law? [Yes] [No]

5. Does the plan, in exchange for any valuable consideration, offer to arrange the provision of specified legal services that are paid for in advance of any immediate need for the specified legal service ("covered services")? [Yes] [No]

6. Are the legal services the plan offers to arrange provided by North Carolina licensed attorneys who are not employees, directors, or owners of the plan? [Yes] [No]

a. Attach a list of the names, addresses, bar numbers, and telephone numbers of all North Carolina licensed attorneys who have agreed to participate in the plan. This list should be alphabetized by attorney last name.

7. Do the covered services the plan offers to arrange extend beyond the sale of an identified, limited legal service, such as drafting a will, for a fixed, one-time fee? [Yes] [No]

8. Has the plan owner signing below read and gained an understanding of the administrative rules applicable to prepaid legal services plans as adopted by the State Bar Council? [Yes] [No]

9. Does the plan owner signing below agree to comply with the administrative rules applicable to prepaid legal services plans as adopted by the State Bar Council and accept responsibility for the plan's compliance with those administrative rules? [Yes] [No]

10. Has the plan owner signing below read and gained an understanding of the law governing the unauthorized practice of law as set out in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 84-2.1, 4, and 5? [Yes] [No]

11. Is a check for the initial registration fee made payable to the State Bar enclosed with this statement? [Yes] [No]

12. After reading the foregoing form and the list of all North Carolina licensed attorneys who have agreed to participate in the plan in its entirety, does the plan owner signing below certify that all statements made in this form and the list of all North Carolina licensed attorneys who have agreed to participate in the plan are true and correct to the best of his or her knowledge? [Yes] [No]

Date

Signature of Plan Owner

Typed Name of Plan Owner

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Readopted Eff. Dec 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007; October 7, 2010; September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0304(b) on September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0311 ANNUAL REGISTRATION RENEWAL

After its initial registration, a plan may continue to operate so long as it timely files the proscribed registration renewal form and its operation is consistent with its registration statement. The plan owner shall file the registration renewal form contained in Rule .0312 with the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar and pay the annual registration fee on or before December 1 of each year. If a plan fails to file the registration renewal form and pay the annual registration fee by December 1, counsel may request the committee at its next quarterly meeting to instruct the secretary of the State Bar to serve upon the plan owner a notice to show cause why the plan's registration should not be revoked as provided in Rule .0316.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Readopted Eff. Dec 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007; September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0307 on September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0312 REGISTRATION RENEWAL FORM

Registration Renewal Form for Prepaid Legal Services Plan

Each prepaid legal services plan registered to operate in North Carolina shall renew its registration each year. If a plan fails to file the registration renewal form and pay the annual registration fee by December 1, counsel may request the Authorized

Practice Committee at its next quarterly meeting to instruct the secretary of the State Bar to serve upon the plan's owner a notice to show cause why the plan's registration should not be revoked.

1. Current Registration Information

- a. Plan Name:
- b. Plan Number:

2. Is the plan still offered by a person or entity not authorized to engage in the practice of law? [Yes] [No]

3. Does the plan, in exchange for any valuable consideration, still offer to arrange the provision of specified legal services that are paid for in advance of any immediate need for the specified legal service ("covered services")? [Yes] [No]

4. Are the legal services the plan offers to arrange still provided by North Carolina licensed attorneys who are not employees, directors, or owners of the plan? [Yes] [No]

5. Do the covered services the plan offers to arrange still extend beyond the sale of an identified, limited legal service, such as drafting a will, for a fixed, one-time fee? [Yes] [No]

6. Attach a list of the names, addresses, bar numbers, and telephone numbers of all North Carolina licensed attorneys who provide or offer to provide the legal services arranged by the plan. This list should be alphabetized by attorney last name.

7. If there have been any amendments to the plan since its initial registration statement or since it renewed its registration last year that are not indicated herein, please attach copies of the registration amendment forms filed with the State Bar and the letter from the State Bar reporting that such forms were registered to this report and indicate in the box provided whether any amendments are attached.

8. Is a check for the non-refundable annual registration fee payable to the State Bar enclosed with this report? [Yes] [No]

9. Are there any changes the owner signing below wishes to make to the plan? [Yes] [No]

- a. If "No," please skip to item 15. If "Yes," only complete the items below that the plan owner wishes to change. Please note that any desired changes must be indicated here and that the plan owner must complete and file a separate registration amendment form.

10. New Name of Plan:

11. New Owner of Plan

- a. Name:
- b. Title:

12. New Principal North Carolina Address for Plan

- a. Address:
- b. City:
- c. State:
- d. Zip Code:

13. New Contact Information for Plan Representative

- a. Name:
- b. Address:
- c. City:
- d. State:
- e. Zip Code:
- f. Telephone Number:
- g. Email Address:

14. Does the plan owner signing below understand that the amendments to this plan may not be implemented until the registration amendment form is registered with the State Bar in accordance with 27 N.C.A.C. 1E, §§ .0313 through .0315 of the North Carolina State Bar Regulations for Organizations Practicing Law? [Yes] [No]

15. Does the plan owner signing below certify that the information contained herein is true and correct to the best of his or her knowledge? [Yes] [No]

Date

Signature of Plan Owner

Typed Name of Plan Owner

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Adopted by the Supreme Court: September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0313 REGISTRATION AMENDMENTS

(a) A plan owner shall file an amendment to its registration statement ("registration amendment") to document any change in the information provided in its initial registration statement or in its last registration renewal form. A plan owner shall file the registration amendment form contained in Rule .0315 with the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar prior to any change that requires the plan owner to file an amendment. An amendment to a plan shall not be implemented until the registration amendment is registered in accordance with Rule .0314.

(b) A plan owner shall not be required to file a registration amendment form each time there is a change in licensed North Carolina attorneys who have agreed to provide the legal services arranged by the plan. A plan owner shall provide a current list of licensed North Carolina attorneys who agree to provide the legal services arranged by the plan with each registration renewal form as set forth in Rule .0312.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Readopted Eff. Dec 8, 1994;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007; September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0306 on September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0314 DETERMINATION OF REGISTRATION AMENDMENTS

Counsel shall review a plan's registration amendment. If counsel determines that the plan will continue to satisfy the requirements for registration, counsel shall inform the plan owner that the plan's registration amendment will be registered. If counsel determines that the plan will not continue to satisfy the requirements for registration, counsel shall inform the plan owner that the registration amendment will not be registered and shall explain the deficiencies. Counsel shall provide a report to the committee each quarter identifying the plans that submitted registration amendments and whether each registration amendment was registered.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Adopted by the Supreme Court: September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0315 REGISTRATION AMENDMENT FORM

Registration Amendment Form for Prepaid Legal Services Plan

A prepaid legal services plan shall file a registration amendment form with the secretary of the North Carolina State Bar no later than 30 days after a change in the information provided by the plan in its initial registration statement or in its last registration renewal form. Changes to the operation of the plan or to the governing documents of the plan that are inconsistent with the information contained in the plan's initial registration statement or in the plan's last registration renewal form may not be implemented until they are registered with the State Bar.

The plan owner shall provide complete responses to items 2 – 5 if he or she would like to amend the plan's current registration information. There is no need to complete items 2 – 5 if they have not changed. The plan owner shall provide complete responses to item 1 and items 6 – 11.

1. Current Registration Information

- a. Plan Name:
- b. Plan Number:

2. New Name of Plan:

3. New Owner of Plan

- a. Name:
- b. Title:

4. New Principal North Carolina Address for Plan

- a. Address:
- b. City:
- c. State:
- d. Zip Code:

5. New Contact Information for Plan Representative

- a. Name:
- b. Address:
- c. City:
- d. State:
- e. Zip Code:
- f. Telephone Number:
- g. Email Address:

6. Is the plan still offered by a person or entity not authorized to engage in the practice of law? [Yes] [No]

7. Does the plan, in exchange for any valuable consideration, still offer to arrange the provision of specified legal services that are paid for in advance of any immediate need for the specified legal service ("covered services")? [Yes] [No]

8. Are the legal services the plan offers to arrange still provided by North Carolina licensed attorneys who are not employees, directors, or owners of the plan? [Yes] [No]

9. Do the covered services the plan offers to arrange still extend beyond the sale of an identified, limited legal service, such as drafting a will, for a fixed, one-time fee? [Yes] [No]

10. After reading the foregoing form in its entirety, does the plan owner signing below certify that all statements made in this form are true and correct to the best of his or her knowledge? [Yes] [No]

11. Does the plan owner signing below understand that the amendments to this plan may not be implemented until the registration amendment form is registered with the North Carolina State Bar in accordance with 27 N.C.A.C. 1E §§ .0313 through .0315 of the North Carolina State Bar Regulations for Organizations Practicing Law? [Yes] [No]

Date

Signature of Plan Owner

Typed Name of Plan Owner

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;

Adopted by the Supreme Court: September 25, 2020.

27 NCAC 01E .0316 REVOCATION OF REGISTRATION

Whenever it appears that a plan: (1) no longer meets the definition of a prepaid legal services plan; (2) is marketed or operates in a manner that is not consistent with the representations made in the initial registration statement, the registration amendment form, or with the most recent registration renewal form filed with the North Carolina State Bar; (3) is marketed or operates in a manner that constitutes the unauthorized practice of law; (4) is marketed or operates in a manner that violates state or federal laws or regulations, including the rules and regulations of the State Bar; or (5) has failed to pay the annual registration fee, the committee may instruct the secretary of the State Bar to serve upon the plan owner a notice to show cause why the plan's registration should not be revoked. The notice shall specify the plan's apparent deficiency and allow the plan owner to file with the secretary a written response within 30 days of service. If the plan owner fails to file a timely written response, the secretary shall issue an order revoking the plan's registration and shall serve the order upon the plan owner. If a timely written response is filed, the secretary shall schedule a hearing, in accordance with Rule .0317 below, before the committee and shall so notify the plan owner. The secretary may waive such hearing based upon a stipulation by the plan owner and counsel that the plan's apparent deficiency has been cured. All notices to show cause and orders required to be served herein shall be served: (1) by certified mail at the address last provided to the State Bar by the plan owner; (2) in accordance with any other provisions of Rule 4 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure; or (3) by a State Bar investigator or by any person authorized by Rule 4 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure to serve process. The State Bar shall not register the registration renewal form of any plan for which the secretary has issued a notice to show cause under this section, but the plan may continue to operate under the prior registration statement until resolution of the show cause notice by the council.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1
Adopted by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0312 on September 25, 2020.*

27 NCAC 01E .0317 HEARING BEFORE THE AUTHORIZED PRACTICE COMMITTEE

The chair of the Authorized Practice Committee shall preside at any hearing concerning the registration of a prepaid legal services plan. The chair shall cause a record of the proceedings to be made. Strict compliance with the North Carolina Rules of Evidence is not required, but the North Carolina Rules of Evidence may be used to guide the committee in the conduct of an orderly hearing. The counsel shall represent the State Bar and may offer witnesses and documentary evidence, may cross-examine adverse witnesses, and may argue the State Bar's position. The plan owner may appear and may be represented by counsel, may offer witnesses and documentary evidence, may cross-examine adverse witnesses, and may argue the plan owner's position. The burden of proof shall be upon the plan owner to establish that the plan meets the definition of a prepaid legal services plan, that all registration fees have been paid, and that the plan has operated and does operate in a manner consistent with all applicable law, with these rules, and with all representations made in its then current registration statement. If the plan owner meets its burden of proof, the initial registration statement, the registration amendment form, or the registration renewal form in question shall be registered. If the plan owner fails to meet its burden of proof, the committee shall recommend to the council that the plan's initial registration statement, registration amendment form, or registration renewal form be denied or revoked.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Adopted by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0313 on September 25, 2020.*

27 NCAC 01E .0318 ACTION BY THE COUNCIL

Upon the recommendation of the Authorized Practice Committee, the council may enter an order denying or revoking the registration of a plan. The order shall be effective when entered by the council. A copy of the order shall be served upon the plan owner as prescribed in Rule .0316 above.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23; 84-23.1;
Adopted by the Supreme Court: August 23, 2007;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: September 25, 2020;
Rule was transferred from 27 NCAC 01E .0314 on September 25, 2020.*

SECTION .0400 - RULES FOR ARBITRATION OF INTERNAL LAW FIRM DISPUTES

27 NCAC 01E .0401 PURPOSE

Subject to these rules, the North Carolina State Bar will administer a voluntary binding arbitration program for resolution of disputed issues between lawyers arising out of the dissolution of law firms or disputes within law firms. The purpose of this arbitration procedure is to provide a mechanism for resolving economic disputes between lawyers arising out of the operation or dissolution of law firms.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01E .0402 SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION

The program is voluntary. The procedure shall be instituted by a written submission to arbitration agreement, executed by all the parties to the dispute, in a form and manner as provided by the executive director of the North Carolina State Bar.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01E .0403 JURISDICTION

The procedure may be used for the resolution of any dispute if all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) the disputed issues submitted to arbitration hereunder shall be solely between or among lawyers who are members of the same law firm;
- (2) the dispute arises out of an economic relationship between or among lawyers concerning the operation, dissolution, or proposed dissolution of the law firm of which they are members;
- (3) at least one of the parties to such dispute resides or maintains an office for the practice of law in the state of North Carolina and is a member of the North Carolina State Bar;
- (4) all parties agree in a written submission to arbitration agreement to submit the issues in dispute to binding arbitration under these rules and procedures.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01E .0404 ADMINISTRATION

The North Carolina State Bar is the administrator of the arbitration program, through its executive director and his designees, to carry out all administrative functions, including those specified in Rules .0406 through .0410 of this subchapter.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01E .0405 UNIFORM ARBITRATION ACT

Except as modified herein, all arbitration procedures will be governed by Article 45A of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes of North Carolina (Uniform Arbitration Act). Said Uniform Arbitration Act and any amendments thereto are hereby incorporated by reference and constitute a part of these rules.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01E .0406 LIST OF ARBITRATORS

The North Carolina State Bar shall establish a list of arbitrators, consisting of attorneys or retired judges, who have been members of the North Carolina State Bar for at least 10 years and who have indicated a willingness to serve. The parties shall, in their submission to arbitration agreement, elect to have one or three arbitrators. The administrator shall thereafter provide each party with the list of arbitrators.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.

27 NCAC 01E .0407 SELECTION OF ARBITRATORS

If three arbitrators are to be selected, then

- (1) each party to the dispute shall, within 10 days after receipt of notice from the administrator, select one arbitrator on the approved list who shall be contacted by the administrator concerning his or her ability to serve and dates of availability. The two arbitrators so chosen shall execute an oath and appointment of arbitrator certificate provided by the administrator. Within 15 days after certification, the two arbitrators shall choose a third from the administrator's approved list, who shall also execute an oath and appointment certificate. Failure of the two arbitrators to choose a third within the allotted time shall constitute a consent to have the third arbitrator chosen by the administrator;
- (2) if the opposing parties cannot, because of the number of parties involved, settle upon two arbitrators who are to choose the third as set forth above, then the administrator shall notify the parties and appoint all three arbitrators from the approved list.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01E .0408 FEES AND EXPENSES

All expenses and the arbitrator(s)' fees shall be paid by the parties. Arbitrator(s)' compensation shall be at the same rate paid to retired judges who are assigned to temporary active service as provided in G.S. 7A-52 or any successor statutory provision. The administrator may require from each party an escrow deposit covering anticipated fees and expenses.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01E .0409 CONFIDENTIALITY

It is the policy of the North Carolina State Bar to protect the confidentiality of all arbitration proceedings. The parties, the arbitrators, and the North Carolina State Bar shall keep all proceedings confidential, except that any final award shall be enforceable under Chapter 1, Article 45A.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

27 NCAC 01E .0410 AUTHORITY TO ADOPT AMENDMENTS AND REGULATIONS

The North Carolina State Bar may, from time to time, adopt and amend procedures and regulations consistent with these rules and amend or supplement these rules or otherwise regulate the arbitration procedure.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Readopted Eff. December 8, 1994.*

SUBCHAPTER 1F - REGULATIONS FOR FOREIGN LEGAL CONSULTANTS

SECTION .0100 - FOREIGN LEGAL CONSULTANTS

27 NCAC 01F .0101 APPLICATIONS

All applications for certification as a foreign legal consultant must be made on forms supplied by the North Carolina State Bar and must be complete in every detail. Every supporting document required by the application form must be submitted with each application. The application form may be obtained by writing or by telephoning the Bar's offices.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.*

27 NCAC 01F .0102 APPLICATION FORM

(a) The application for certification as a foreign legal consultant form requires an applicant to supply full and complete information under oath relating to the applicant's background, including family history, past and current residences, education, military service, past and present employment, citizenship, credit status, involvement in disciplinary, civil, or criminal proceedings, substance abuse, mental treatment and bar admission and discipline history.

(b) Every applicant must submit as part of the application:

- (1) A certificate from the authority that has final jurisdiction regarding matters of professional discipline in the foreign country or jurisdiction in which the applicant is admitted to practice law, or the equivalent thereof. This certificate must be signed by a responsible official or one of the members of the executive body of the authority, imprinted with the official seal of the authority, if any, and must certify:
 - (A) The authority's jurisdiction in such matters;
 - (B) The applicant's admission to practice law, or the equivalent thereof, in the foreign country, the date of admission and the applicant's standing as an attorney or the equivalent thereof; and
 - (C) Whether any charge or complaint has ever been filed with the authority against the applicant and if so, the substance of and adjudication or resolution of each charge or complaint.
- (2) A letter of recommendation from one of the members of the executive body of this authority or from one of the judges of the highest law court or court of general original jurisdiction of the foreign country, certifying the applicant's professional qualifications, and a certificate from the clerk of this authority or the clerk of the highest law court or court of general original jurisdiction, attesting to the genuineness of the applicant's signature;
- (3) A letter of recommendation from at least two attorneys, or the equivalent thereof, admitted in and practicing law in the foreign country, stating the length of time, when, and under what circumstances they have known the applicant and their appraisal of the applicant's moral character;
- (4) Two sets of clear fingerprints;
- (5) Two executed informational Authorization and Release forms;
- (6) A birth certificate;
- (7) Copies of all applications to take a bar examination or an attorney's examination or for admission to the practice of law that the applicant has filed in any state or territory of the U.S., or the District of Columbia or in any foreign country;
- (8) Certified copies of any legal proceedings in which the applicant has been a party;
- (9) Two recent 2-inch by 3-inch photographs of the applicant showing a front view of the applicant's head and shoulders; and
- (10) Any other relevant documents or information as may be required by the North Carolina State Bar.

(c) The application must be filed in duplicate. The duplicate may be a photocopy of the original.

(d) The application and all required attachments shall be in English or accompanied by duly authenticated English translations.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.*

27 NCAC 01F .0103 REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS

As a prerequisite to being certified as a foreign legal consultant, an applicant shall:

- (1) Possess the qualifications of character and general fitness requisite for an attorney and counselor at law and be of good moral character and entitled to the high regard and confidence of the public and have satisfied the requirements of Rule .0104 of this Section at the time the certificate is issued;
- (2) Have been admitted to practice as an attorney, or the equivalent thereof, in a foreign country for at least five years as of the date of application for a certificate of registration;
- (3) Certify in writing that he or she intends to practice in the State as a foreign legal consultant and intends to maintain an office in the State for this practice;
- (4) Be at least 21 years of age;
- (5) Have been actively and substantially engaged in the practice of law or a profession or occupation that requires admission to the practice of law, or the equivalent thereof, in the foreign country in which the applicant holds a license for at least five of the seven years immediately preceding the date of application for a certificate of registration and is in good standing as an attorney, or the equivalent thereof, in that country;

- (6) Have filed an application as prescribed in Rule .0102 of this Section;
- (7) Be at all times in good professional standing and entitled to practice in every state or territory of the U.S. or in the District of Columbia, in which the applicant has been licensed to practice law, and in every foreign country in which the applicant is admitted to the practice of law or the equivalent thereof and is not under any pending charges of misconduct. The applicant may be inactive and in good standing in any foreign country or in any state or territory of the U.S. or in the District of Columbia; and
- (8) Satisfy the Bar that the foreign country in which the applicant is licensed will admit North Carolina attorneys to practice as foreign legal consultants or the equivalent thereof.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01F .0104 BURDEN OF PROVING MORAL CHARACTER AND GENERAL FITNESS

Every applicant shall have the burden of proving that the applicant possesses the qualifications of character and general fitness requisite for an attorney and counselor-at-law and is possessed of good moral character and is entitled to the high regard and confidence of the public.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01F .0105 FAILURE TO DISCLOSE

No one shall be issued a certificate of registration as a foreign legal consultant in this state:

- (1) Who fails to disclose fully to the Bar, whether requested to do so or not, the facts relating to any disciplinary proceedings or charges as to the applicant's professional conduct, whether same have been terminated or not, in this or any other state, or any federal court or other jurisdiction or foreign country, or
- (2) Who fails to disclose fully to the Bar, whether requested to do so or not, any and all facts relating to any civil or criminal proceedings, charges or investigations involving the applicant, whether the same have been terminated or not in this or any other state, or any federal court or other jurisdiction or foreign country.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01F .0106 INVESTIGATION BY COUNSEL

The counsel will conduct any necessary investigation regarding the application and will advise the Administrative Committee of the North Carolina State Bar of the findings of any such investigation.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84A-1 to 84A-8;
Adopted Eff. March 7, 1996;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01F .0107 RECOMMENDATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

(a) Upon receipt of all completed application forms, attachments, filing fees and information required by the Bar, and completion of the Bar's investigation, the committee shall make a written recommendation to the council respecting whether an applicant for certification as a foreign legal consultant has met the requirements of G.S. 84A-1 and these rules. Prior to making a written recommendation, the committee may request further information from the applicant or other sources and may require the applicant to appear before it upon reasonable notice. The committee's written recommendation shall include a statement of the reason(s) for the committee's decision.

(b) A copy of the committee's recommendation shall be served upon the applicant pursuant to Rule 4 of the N.C. Rules of Civil Procedure.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84A-1 to 84A-8;
Adopted Eff. March 7, 1996;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.

27 NCAC 01F .0108 APPEAL FROM COMMITTEE DECISION

- (a) The applicant will have 30 days from the date of service of the committee's recommendation in which to serve a written request for a hearing upon the secretary pursuant to Rule 4 of the N.C. Rules of Civil Procedure.
- (b) If the applicant does not request a hearing in a timely fashion, the committee will forward its recommendation to the council. The council will consider the application and the recommendation of the committee and will make a final written recommendation to the N.C. Supreme Court, as set out in 27 NCAC 01F .0110(f) of this Subchapter.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84A-1 to 84A-8;
Adopted Eff. March 7, 1996;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.*

27 NCAC 01F .0109 HEARING PROCEDURE

(a) Notice, Time & Place of Hearing

- (1) The chair of the committee shall fix the time and place of hearing within 30 days after the applicant's request for a hearing is served upon the secretary. The hearing shall be held as soon as practicable after the request is filed.
- (2) The notice of the hearing shall include the date, time and place of the hearing and shall be served upon the applicant at least 10 days before the hearing date.

(b) Hearing Panel:

- (1) The chair of the committee shall appoint a hearing panel composed of three members of the committee to consider the application and make a written recommendation to the council.
- (2) The chair shall appoint one of the three members of the panel to serve as the presiding member. The presiding member shall rule on any question of procedure which arises during the hearing; preside at the deliberations of the panel, sign the written determinations of the panel and report the panel's determination to the council.

(c) Proceedings before the Hearing Panel:

- (1) A majority of the panel members is necessary to decide the application.
- (2) Following the hearing on the contested application, the panel will make a written recommendation to the council on behalf of the committee regarding whether the application should be granted. The recommendation shall include appropriate findings of fact and conclusions of law.
- (3) The applicant will have the burden of proving that he or she has met all the requirements of 27 NCAC 01F .0102-.0104 of this Subchapter.
- (4) At the hearing, the applicant and State Bar counsel will have the right:
 - (A) to appear personally and be heard
 - (B) to call and examine witnesses
 - (C) to offer exhibits
 - (D) to cross-examine witnesses
- (5) In addition, the applicant will have the right to be represented by counsel.
- (6) The hearing will be conducted in accordance with the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure for nonjury trials insofar as practicable and by the Rules of Evidence applicable in superior court, unless otherwise provided by this subchapter or the parties agree otherwise.
- (7) The hearing shall be reported by a certified court reporter. The applicant will pay the costs associated with obtaining the court reporter's services for the hearing. The applicant shall pay the costs of the transcript and shall arrange for the preparation of the transcript with the court reporter. The applicant may also be taxed with all other costs of the hearing, but the costs shall not include any compensation to the members of the hearing panel.
- (8) The written recommendation of the hearing panel shall be served upon the applicant and the counsel within 14 days of the date of the hearing.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84A-1 to 84A-8;
Adopted Eff. March 7, 1996;
Amended Eff. February 3, 2000.*

27 NCAC 01F .0110 REVIEW AND ORDER OF COUNCIL

- (a) Review by Council. The applicant shall compile a record of the proceedings before the hearing panel, including a legible copy of the complete transcript, all exhibits introduced into evidence at the hearing, all pleadings and all motions and orders,

unless the applicant and counsel agree in writing to shorten the record. Any agreement regarding the record shall be included in the record transmitted to the council.

(b) **Transmission of Record to Council.** The applicant shall provide a copy of the record to the counsel not later than 90 days after the hearing unless an extension is granted by the president of the N.C. State Bar for good cause shown. The applicant shall transmit a copy of the record to each member of the council, at the applicant's expense, no later than 30 days before the council meeting at which the application is to be considered.

(c) **Costs.** The applicant shall bear all of the costs of transcribing, copying, and transmitting the record to the members of the council.

(d) **Dismissal for Failure to Apply.** If the applicant fails to comply fully with any provisions of this Rule, the counsel may file a motion with the secretary to dismiss the application.

(e) **Appearance before the Council.** In his or her discretion, the president of the State Bar may permit the counsel for the State Bar and the applicant to present oral or written argument but the council will not consider additional evidence not in the record transmitted from the hearing panel absent a showing that the ends of justice so require or that undue hardship will result if the additional evidence is not presented.

(f) **Order by Council.** The council will review the recommendation of the hearing panel and the record and will determine whether the applicant has met all of the requirements of Rules .0102 - .0104 of this Section. The council will make a written recommendation to the N.C. Supreme Court regarding whether the application should be granted. The council's recommendation will contain a statement of the reasons for the recommendation and shall attach to it the application.

(g) **Costs.** The council may tax the costs attributable to the proceeding against the applicant.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01F .0111 APPLICATION FEES; REFUNDS; RETURNED CHECKS

(a) Every application and every reapplication for certification as a foreign legal consultant shall be accompanied by a fee of two hundred dollars (\$200.00) paid in U.S. currency.

(b) No part of the fee will be refunded.

(c) Failure to pay the application fees required by these Rules shall cause the application to be deemed not filed. If the check payable for the application fee is not honored upon presentment for any reason other than error of the bank, the application will be deemed not filed. All checks presented to the Bar for any fees which are not honored upon presentment will be returned to the applicant, who shall pay the Bar in cash, cashier's check, certified check or money order any fees payable to the Bar, along with a twenty dollar (\$20.00) additional fee for processing the dishonored check.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01F .0112 PERMANENT RECORD

All information furnished to the Bar by an applicant shall be deemed material, and all such information shall be and become a permanent record of the Bar. Records, papers and other documents containing information collected or compiled by the North Carolina State Bar and its members or employees as a result of any investigation, application, inquiry or interview conducted in connection with an application for certificate of registration are not public records within the meaning of G.S. 132.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

27 NCAC 01F .0113 DENIAL; RE-APPLICATION

No new application or petition for reconsideration of a previous application from an applicant who has been denied a certificate of registration as a foreign legal consultant shall be considered by the Bar within a period of three years next after the date of such denial unless, for good cause shown, permission for reapplication or petition for a reconsideration is granted by the Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-4;
Eff. March 7, 1996.

SECTION .0100 THE PLAN FOR CERTIFICATION OF PARALEGALS

27 NCAC 01G .0101 PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan for certification of paralegals (plan) is to assist in the delivery of legal services to the public by identifying individuals who are qualified by education and training and have demonstrated knowledge, skill, and proficiency to perform substantive legal work under the direction and supervision of a licensed lawyer, and including any individual who may be otherwise authorized by applicable state or federal law to provide legal services directly to the public; and to improve the competency of those individuals by establishing mandatory continuing legal education and other requirements of certification.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 6, 2004.*

27 NCAC 01G .0102 JURISDICTION: AUTHORITY

The Council of the North Carolina State Bar (the council) with the approval of the Supreme Court of North Carolina hereby establishes the Board of Paralegal Certification (board), which board shall have jurisdiction over the certification of paralegals in North Carolina.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 6, 2004.*

27 NCAC 01G .0103 OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for operating the paralegal certification program rests with the board, subject to the statutes governing the practice of law, the authority of the council and the rules of governance of the board.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 6, 2004.*

27 NCAC 01G .0104 SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF BOARD

The board shall have nine members, five of whom must be lawyers in good standing and authorized to practice law in the state of North Carolina. One of the members who is a lawyer shall be a program director at a qualified paralegal studies program. Four members of the board shall be paralegals certified under the plan, provided, however, that the paralegals appointed to the inaugural board shall be exempt from this requirement during their initial and successive terms but each such member shall be eligible, during the shorter of such initial term or the alternative qualification period, for certification by the board upon the board's determination that the member meets the requirements for certification in Rule .0119(b).

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. October 6, 2004;
Amended Eff. March 2, 2006.*

27 NCAC 01G .0105 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS; WHEN; REMOVAL

(a) Appointment. The council shall appoint the members of the board, provided, however, after the appointment of the initial members of the board, each paralegal member appointed for an initial term shall be selected by the council from two nominees determined by a vote of all active certified paralegals in an election conducted by the board.

(b) Procedure for Nomination of Candidates for Paralegal Members.

- (1) Composition of Nominating Committee. At least 60 days prior to a meeting of the council at which one or more paralegal members of the board are subject to appointment for a full three-year term, the board shall appoint a nominating committee comprised of seven certified paralegals as selected by the board. The nominating committee should consist of active certified paralegals, including but not limited to representatives from paralegal and legal assistant associations, organizations, or divisions of legal organizations, as well as independent paralegals (not employed by a law firm, government entity, or legal department).

- (2) Selection of Candidates. The nominating committee shall meet within 30 days of its appointment to select at least two but no more than five certified paralegals as candidates for each paralegal member vacancy on the board for inclusion on the ballot to be sent to all active certified paralegals.
- (3) Vote of Certified Paralegals. At least 30 days prior to the meeting of the council at which a paralegal member appointment to the board will be made, a vote on the list of candidates provided by the nominating committee shall be conducted of all active certified paralegals in a manner approved by the board. Notice of the vote shall be sent to all active certified paralegals using contact information on file with the North Carolina State Bar, shall contain instructions on how to participate in the vote, and shall state how many paralegal member positions on the board are subject to appointment and the names of the candidates selected by the nominating committee for each such position. The board shall maintain appropriate records respecting how many ballots or notices are sent to prospective voters in each election as well as how many ballots are returned. Votes cast or received after the deadline stated in the notice will not be counted. The names of the two candidates receiving the most votes for each open paralegal member position shall be the nominees submitted to the council.

(c) Time of Appointment. The first members of the board shall be appointed as of the quarterly meeting of the council following the creation of the board. Thereafter, members shall be appointed annually at the quarterly meeting of the council occurring on the anniversary of the appointment of the initial board.

(d) Vacancies. Vacancies occurring by reason of death, resignation, or removal shall be filled by appointment of the council, subject to the requirements of Rule .0105(a), at the next quarterly meeting following the event giving rise to the vacancy, and the person so appointed shall serve for the balance of the vacated term.

(e) Removal. Any member of the board may be removed at any time by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the council in session at a regularly called meeting.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court October 6, 2004;
Amendments approved by the Supreme Court: March 8, 2007; March 11, 2010; August 25, 2011; March 6, 2014;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court November 2, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01G .0106 TERM OF OFFICE

Subject to Rule .0107 of this Subchapter, each member of the board shall serve for a term of three years beginning as of the first day of the month following the date on which the council appoints the member.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 6, 2004.

27 NCAC 01G .0107 STAGGERED TERMS

The members of the board shall be appointed to staggered terms such that three members are appointed in each year. Of the initial board, three members (one lawyer and two paralegals) shall be appointed to terms of one year; three members (two lawyers and one paralegal) shall be appointed to terms of two years; and three members (two lawyers and one paralegal) shall be appointed to terms of three years. Thereafter, three members (lawyers or paralegals as necessary to fill expired terms) shall be appointed in each year for full three year terms.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 6, 2004.

27 NCAC 01G .0108 SUCCESSION

Each member of the board shall be entitled to serve for one full three-year term and to succeed himself or herself for one additional three-year term. Each certified paralegal member shall be eligible for reappointment by the council at the end of his or her term without appointment of a nominating committee or vote of all active certified paralegals as would be otherwise required by Rule .0105 of this subchapter. Thereafter, no person may be reappointed without having been off of the board for at least three years; provided, however, that any member who is designated chairperson at the time that the member's second three-year term expires may serve one additional year on the board in the capacity of chair.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court October 6, 2004;
Amendments approved by the Supreme Court: March 6, 2014;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court November 2, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01G .0109 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

The council shall appoint the chairperson of the board from among the members of the board. The term of the chairperson shall be one year. The chairperson may be reappointed thereafter during his or her tenure on the board. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the board, shall prepare and present to the council the annual report of the board, and generally shall represent the board in its dealings with the public.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Approved by the Supreme Court October 6, 2004;
Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court November 2, 2022 and re-entered into the Supreme Court's minutes March 20, 2024.

27 NCAC 01G .0110 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The council shall appoint the vice-chairperson of the board from among the members of the board. The term of the vice-chairperson shall be one year. The vice-chairperson may be reappointed thereafter during his or her tenure on the board. The vice-chairperson shall preside at and represent the board in the absence of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him or her by the chairperson or by the board.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 6, 2004.

27 NCAC 01G .0111 SOURCE OF FUNDS

Funding for the program carried out by the board shall come from such application fees, examination fees, annual fees or recertification fees as the board, with the approval of the council, may establish.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 6, 2004.

27 NCAC 01G .0112 FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

All funds of the board shall be considered funds of the North Carolina State Bar and shall be administered and disbursed accordingly.

- (1) Maintenance of Accounts: Audit - The North Carolina State Bar shall maintain a separate account for funds of the board such that such funds and expenditures there from can be readily identified. The accounts of the board shall be audited on an annual basis in connection with the audits of the North Carolina State Bar.
- (2) Investment Criteria - The funds of the board shall be handled, invested and reinvested in accordance with investment policies adopted by the council for the handling of dues, rents and other revenues received by the North Carolina State Bar in carrying out its official duties.
- (3) Disbursement - Disbursement of funds of the board shall be made by or under the direction of the secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina State Bar.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 6, 2004.

27 NCAC 01G .0113 MEETINGS

The board by resolution may set regular meeting dates and places. Special meetings of the board may be called at any time upon notice given by the chairperson. Notice of meeting shall be given at least one day prior to the meeting by mail, electronic mail, telegram, facsimile transmission, or telephone. A quorum of the board for conducting its official business shall be five or more of the members serving at the time of the meeting.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

Eff. October 6, 2004.

27 NCAC 01G .0114 ANNUAL REPORT

The board shall prepare a report of its activities for the preceding year and shall present the same at the annual meeting of the council.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 6, 2004.*

27 NCAC 01G .0115 POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD

Subject to the general jurisdiction of the council and the North Carolina Supreme Court, the board shall have jurisdiction of all matters pertaining to certification of paralegals and shall have the power and duty

- (1) to administer the plan of certification for paralegals;
- (2) to appoint, supervise, act on the recommendations of, and consult with committees as appointed by the board or the chairperson;
- (3) to certify paralegals or deny, suspend or revoke the certification of paralegals;
- (4) to establish and publish procedures, rules, regulations, and bylaws to implement this plan;
- (5) to propose and request the council to make amendments to this plan whenever appropriate;
- (6) to cooperate with other boards or agencies in enforcing standards of professional conduct;
- (7) to evaluate and approve continuing legal education courses for the purpose of meeting the continuing legal education requirements established by the board for the certification of paralegals;
- (8) to cooperate with other organizations, boards and agencies engaged in the recognition, education or regulation of paralegals; and
- (9) to set fees, with the approval of the council, and to, in appropriate circumstances, waive such fees.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. October 6, 2004;
Amended Eff. March 2, 2006.*

27 NCAC 01G .0116 RETAINED JURISDICTION OF THE COUNCIL

The council retains jurisdiction with respect to the following matters:

- (1) amending this plan;
- (2) hearing appeals taken from actions of the board;
- (3) establishing or approving fees to be charged in connection with the plan;
- (4) regulating the conduct of lawyers in the supervision of paralegals; and
- (5) determining whether to pursue injunctive relief as authorized by G. S. 84-37 against persons acting in violation of this plan.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 6, 2004.*

27 NCAC 01G .0117 CONFERRED AND LIMITATIONS IMPOSED

The board in the implementation of this plan shall not alter the following privileges and responsibilities of lawyers and their non-lawyer assistants.

- (1) No rule shall be adopted which shall in any way limit the right of a lawyer to delegate tasks to a non-lawyer assistant or to employ any person to assist him or her in the practice of law.
- (2) No person shall be required to be certified as a paralegal to be employed by a lawyer to assist the lawyer in the practice of law.
- (3) All requirements for and all benefits to be derived from certification as a paralegal are individual and may not be fulfilled by nor attributed to the law firm or other organization or entity employing the paralegal.
- (4) Any person certified as a paralegal under this plan shall be entitled to represent that he or she is a "North Carolina Certified Paralegal (NCCP)", a "North Carolina State Bar Certified Paralegal (NCSB/CP)" or a "Paralegal Certified by the North Carolina State Bar Board of Paralegal Certification."

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

Eff. October 6, 2004.

27 NCAC 01G .0118 CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE

(a) The board shall establish a separate certification committee. The certification committee shall be composed of seven members appointed by the board. At least two members of the committee shall be lawyers, licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state, and two members of the committee shall be certified paralegals. The remaining members of the committee shall be either lawyers, licensed and currently in good standing to practice law in this state, or certified paralegals. The paralegals appointed to the inaugural committee shall be exempt from the certification requirement during their initial term but each such member shall be eligible, during the shorter of such initial term or the alternative qualification period, for certification by the board upon the board's determination that the committee member meets the requirements for certification in Rule .0119(b).

(b) The chair of the Board of Paralegal Certification shall appoint one member of the committee to serve for a one-year term as chair of the committee and one member of the committee to serve for a one-year term as vice chair of the committee. The chair and vice chair may be reappointed to multiple terms in these positions.

(c) Members shall hold office for three years, except those members initially appointed who shall serve as hereinafter designated. Members shall be appointed by the board to staggered terms and the initial appointees shall serve as follows: two shall serve for one year after appointment; two shall serve for two years after appointment; and three shall serve for three years after appointment. Appointment by the board to a vacancy shall be for the remaining term of the member leaving the committee. All members shall be eligible for reappointment to not more than one additional three-year term after having served one full three-year term, provided, however, that the board may reappoint the chairperson of the committee to a third three-year term if the board determines that the reappointment is in the best interest of the program. Meetings of the certification committee shall be held at regular intervals at such times, places and upon such notices as the committee may from time to time prescribe or upon direction of the board.

(d) The committee shall advise and assist the board in carrying out the board's objectives and in the implementation and regulation of this plan by advising the board as to standards for certification of individuals as paralegals. The committee shall be charged with actively administering the plan as follows:

- (1) upon request of the board, make recommendations to the board for certification, continued certification, denial, suspension, or revocation of certification of paralegals and for procedures with respect thereto;
- (2) draft and regularly revise the certification examination and
- (3) perform such other duties and make such other recommendations as may be delegated to or requested by the board.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;

Adopted by the Supreme Court October 6, 2004;

Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 2, 2006; March 6, 2014; September 20, 2018.

27 NCAC 01G .0119 STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION OF PARALEGALS

(a) To qualify for certification as a paralegal, an applicant must pay any required fee, and comply with the following standards:

- (1) Education. The applicant must have earned one of the following:
 - (A) an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree from a qualified paralegal studies program;
 - (B) a certificate from a qualified paralegal studies program and an associate's or bachelor's degree in any discipline from any institution of post-secondary education that is accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education (an accredited US institution) or an equivalent degree from a foreign educational institution if the degree is determined to be equivalent to a degree from an accredited US institution by an organization that is a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) or the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE); or
 - (C) a juris doctorate degree from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association.
- (2) National Certification. If an applicant has obtained and thereafter maintains in active status at all times prior to application (i) the designation Certified Legal Assistant (CLA)/Certified Paralegal (CP) from the National Association of Legal Assistants; (ii) the designation PACE-Registered Paralegal (RP)/Certified Registered Paralegal (CRP) from the National Federation of Paralegal Associations; or (iii) another national paralegal credential approved by the board, the applicant is not required to satisfy the educational standard in paragraph (a)(1).

- (3) Examination. The applicant must achieve a satisfactory score on a written examination designed to test the applicant's knowledge and ability. The board shall assure that the contents and grading of the examinations are designed to produce a uniform minimum level of competence among the certified paralegals.
- (b) Notwithstanding an applicant's satisfaction of the standards set forth in Rule .0119(a), no individual may be certified as a paralegal if:
- (1) the individual's certification or license as a paralegal in any state is under suspension or revocation;
 - (2) the individual's license to practice law in any state is under suspension or revocation;
 - (3) the individual
 - (A) was convicted of a criminal act that reflects adversely on the individual's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a paralegal;
 - (B) engaged in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation;
 - (C) engaged in the unauthorized practice of law; or
 - (D) has had a nonlegal state or federal occupational or professional license suspended or revoked for misconduct; however, the board may certify an applicant whose application discloses conduct described in Rule .0119(c)(3) if, after consideration of mitigating factors, including remorse, reformation of character, and the passage of time, the board determines that the individual is honest, trustworthy, and fit to be a certified paralegal; or
 - (4) the individual is not a legal resident of the United States.
- (c) All matters concerning the qualification of an applicant for certification, including, but not limited to, applications, examinations and examination scores, files, reports, investigations, hearings, findings, recommendations, and adverse determinations shall be confidential so far as is consistent with the effective administration of this plan, fairness to the applicant and due process of law.
- (d) Qualified Paralegal Studies Program. A qualified paralegal studies program is a program of paralegal or legal assistant studies that is an institutional member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or other regional or national accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education, and is either
- (1) approved by the American Bar Association;
 - (2) an institutional member of the American Association for Paralegal Education; or
 - (3) offers at least the equivalent of 18 semester credits of coursework in paralegal studies as prescribed by the American Bar Association Guidelines for the Approval of Paralegal Education including the equivalent of one semester credit in legal ethics.
- (e) Designation as a Qualified Paralegal Studies Program. The board shall determine whether a paralegal studies program is a qualified paralegal studies program upon submission by the program of an application to the board provided, however, a paralegal studies program is not required to submit an application for qualification as long as the program satisfies the requirements of Rule .0119(e)(1) or (2).
- (1) A program designated by the board as a qualified paralegal studies program shall renew its application for designation every five years.
 - (2) An applicant for certification who lists on a certification application a paralegal studies program that does not satisfy the requirements of Rule .0119(e)(1) or (2) or that has not been designated by the board as a qualified paralegal studies program shall be responsible for obtaining a completed application for designation from the program or shall submit the information required on the application for determination that the program is a qualified paralegal studies program.
 - (3) Designation of a paralegal studies program as a qualified paralegal studies program under this section does not constitute an approval or an endorsement of the program by the board or the North Carolina State Bar.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Adopted by the Supreme Court October 6, 2004;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 2, 2006; March 8, 2007; February 5, 2009; March 11, 2010; March 6, 2014; March 5, 2015; June 9, 2016; April 5, 2018.*

27 NCAC 01G .0120 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUED CERTIFICATION OF PARALEGALS

(a) The period of certification as a paralegal shall be one year. During such period the board may require evidence from the paralegal of his or her continued qualification for certification as a paralegal, and the paralegal must consent to inquiry by the board regarding the paralegal's continued competence and qualification to be certified. Application for and approval of continued certification shall be required annually prior to the end of each certification period. To qualify for continued

certification as a paralegal, an applicant must demonstrate participation in not less than six hours of credit in board approved continuing legal education, or its equivalent, during the year within which the application for continued certification is made.

(b) Upon written request of the paralegal, the board may for good cause shown waive strict compliance by such paralegal with the criteria relating to continuing legal education, as those requirements are set forth in Rule .0120(a).

(c) A late fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) will be charged to any certified paralegal who fails to file the renewal application within 45 days of the due date; provided, however, a renewal application will not be accepted more than 90 days after the due date. Failure to renew shall result in lapse of certification.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 6, 2004;
Amended Eff. October 8, 2009.*

27 NCAC 01G .0121 LAPSE, SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION

(a) The board may suspend or revoke its certification of a paralegal, after hearing before the board on appropriate notice, upon a finding that

- (1) the certification was made contrary to the rules and regulations of the board;
- (2) the individual certified as a paralegal made a false representation, omission or misstatement of material fact to the board;
- (3) the individual certified as a paralegal failed to abide by all rules and regulations promulgated by the board;
- (4) the individual certified as a paralegal failed to pay the fees required;
- (5) the individual certified as a paralegal no longer meets the standards established by the board for the certification of paralegals;
- (6) the individual is not eligible for certification on account of one or more of the grounds set forth in Rule .0119(c); or
- (7) the individual violated the confidentiality agreement relative to the questions on the certification examination.

(b) An individual certified as a paralegal has a duty to inform the board promptly of any fact or circumstance described in Rule .0121(a).

(c) If an individual's certification lapses, or if the board revokes a certification, the individual cannot again be certified as a paralegal unless he or she so qualifies upon application made as if for initial certification and upon such other conditions as the board may prescribe. If the board suspends certification of an individual as a paralegal, such certification cannot be reinstated except upon the individual's application and compliance with such conditions and requirements as the board may prescribe.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. October 6, 2004;
Amended Eff. March 6, 2008.*

27 NCAC 01G .0122 RIGHT TO REVIEW AND APPEAL TO COUNCIL

(a) Lapsed Certification. An individual whose certification has lapsed pursuant to Rule .0120(c) of this subchapter for failure to complete all of the requirements for renewal within the prescribed time limit shall have the right to request reinstatement for good cause shown. A request for reinstatement shall be in writing, must state the personal circumstances prohibiting or substantially impeding satisfaction of the requirements for renewal within the prescribed time limit, and must be made within 90 days of the date notice of lapse is mailed to the individual. The request for reinstatement shall be reviewed on the written record and ruled upon by the board. There shall be no other right to review by the board or appeal to the council under this rule.

(b) Denial of Certification or Continued Certification. An individual who is denied certification or continued certification as a paralegal or whose certification is suspended or revoked shall have the right to a review before the board pursuant to the procedures set forth below and, thereafter, the right to appeal the board's ruling thereon to the council under such rules and regulations as the council may prescribe.

- (1) Notification of the Decision of the Board. Following the meeting at which the board denies certification for failure to meet the standards for certification, including failing the examination, denies continued certification, or suspends or revokes certification, the executive director shall promptly notify the individual in writing of the decision of the board. The notification shall specify the reason for the decision of the board and shall inform the individual of his or her right to request a review before the board.

- (2) Request for Review by the Board. Except as provided in paragraph (e) of this rule, within 30 days of the mailing of the notice from the executive director described in paragraph (b) of this rule, the individual may request review by the board. The request shall be in writing and state the reasons for which the individual believes the prior decision of the board should be reconsidered and withdrawn. The request shall state whether the board's review shall be on the written record or at a hearing.
- (3) Review by the Board. A three-member panel of the board shall be appointed by the chair of the board to reconsider the board's decision and take action by a majority of the panel. At least one member of the panel shall be a lawyer member of the board and at least one member of the panel shall be a paralegal member of the board. The decision of the panel shall constitute the final decision of the board.
 - (A) Review on the Record. If requested, the panel shall review the entire written record including the individual's application, all supporting documentation, and any written materials submitted by the individual within 30 days of mailing the request for review. The panel shall make its decision within sixty (60) days of receipt of the written request for review from the individual.
 - (B) Review Hearing. If requested, the panel shall hold a hearing at a time and location that is convenient for the panel members and the individual provided the hearing occurs within sixty (60) days of receipt of the written request for review from the individual. The hearing shall be informal. The Rules of Evidence and the Rules of Civil Procedure shall not apply. The individual may be represented by a lawyer at the hearing, may offer witnesses and exhibits, and may question witnesses for the board. The panel may ask witnesses to appear and may consider exhibits on its own request. Witnesses shall not be sworn. The hearing shall not be reported unless the applicant pays the costs of the transcript and arranges for the preparation of the transcript with the court reporter.
 - (C) Decision of the Panel. The individual shall be notified in writing of the decision of the panel and, if unfavorable, the right to appeal the decision to the council under such rules and regulations as the council may prescribe. To exercise this right, the individual must file an appeal to the council in writing within 30 days of the mailing of the notice of the decision of the panel.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
 Adopted by the Supreme Court October 6, 2004;
 Amendments Approved by the Supreme Court: March 8, 2007; February 5, 2009; March 8, 2013; August 27, 2013; September 20, 2018.*

27 NCAC 01G .0123 INACTIVE STATUS UPON DEMONSTRATION OF HARDSHIP

- (a) Inactive Status. The board shall transfer a certified paralegal to inactive status upon receipt of a petition, on a form approved by the board, demonstrating hardship as defined in Paragraph (b) of this Rule and upon payment of any fees owed to the board at the time of the petition unless waived by the board.
 - (1) The period of inactive status shall be one year from the designated renewal date.
 - (2) On or before the expiration of inactive status, a paralegal on inactive status must file a petition for (continued) inactive status or seek reinstatement to active status by filing a renewal application pursuant to Rule .0120 of this Subchapter. Failure to petition for continued inactive status or renewal shall result in lapse of certification.
 - (3) A paralegal may be inactive for not more than a total of five consecutive years.
 - (4) During a period of inactive status, a paralegal is not required to pay the renewal fee or to complete continuing legal education.
 - (5) During a period of inactive status, a paralegal shall not be entitled to represent that he or she is a North Carolina certified paralegal or to use any of the designations set forth in Rule .0117(4) of this Subchapter.
- (b) Hardship. The following conditions shall qualify as hardship justifying a transfer to inactive status:
 - (1) Financial inability to pay the annual renewal fee and to pay for continuing legal education courses due to unemployment or underemployment of the paralegal for a period of three months or more;
 - (2) Disability or serious illness for a period of three months or more;
 - (3) Active military service; and
 - (4) Transfer of the paralegal's active duty military spouse to a location outside of North Carolina.
- (c) Reinstatement before Expiration of Inactive Status. To be reinstated as a certified paralegal, the paralegal must petition the board for reinstatement by filing a renewal application prior to the expiration of the inactive status period and must pay the annual renewal fee. If the paralegal was inactive for a period of two consecutive calendar years or more during the year prior

to the filing of the petition, the paralegal must complete 12 hours of credit in board-approved continuing paralegal education, or its equivalent. Of the 12 hours, at least 2 hours shall be devoted to the areas of professional responsibility or professionalism, or any combination thereof.

(d) Certification after Expiration of Inactive Status Period. If the inactive status period expires before the paralegal petitions for reinstatement, certification shall lapse, and the paralegal cannot again be certified unless the paralegal qualified upon application made as if for initial certification.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. August 24, 2012.

SECTION .0200 – RULES GOVERNING CONTINUING PARALEGAL EDUCATION

27 NCAC 01G .0201 CONTINUING PARALEGAL EDUCATION (CPE)

(a) Each active certified paralegal subject to these rules shall complete 6 hours of approved continuing education during each year of certification.

(b) Of the 6 hours, at least 1 hour shall be devoted to the areas of professional responsibility or professionalism or any combination thereof.

- (1) A professional responsibility course or segment of a course shall be devoted to (1) the substance, the underlying rationale, and the practical application of the Rules of Professional Conduct; (2) the professional obligations of the lawyer to the client, the court, the public, and other lawyers, and the paralegal's role in assisting the lawyer to fulfill those obligations; (3) the effects of substance abuse and chemical dependency, or debilitating mental condition on a lawyer's or a paralegal's professional responsibilities; or (4) the effects of stress on a paralegal's professional responsibilities.
- (2) A professionalism course or segment of a course shall be devoted to the identification and examination of, and the encouragement of adherence to, non-mandatory aspirational standards of professional conduct that transcend the requirements of the Rules of Professional Conduct. Such courses address principles of competence and dedication to the service of clients, civility, improvement of the justice system, advancement of the rule of law, and service to the community.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. August 18, 2005;
Amended Eff. March 6, 2014.

27 NCAC 01G .0202 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The Board of Paralegal Certification shall approve continuing education activities in compliance with the following standards and provisions.

(a) An approved activity shall have significant intellectual or practical content and the primary objective of increasing the participant's professional competence and proficiency as a paralegal.

(b) An approved activity shall constitute an organized program of learning dealing with matters directly related to the practice of law, professional responsibility, professionalism, or ethical obligations of paralegals.

(c) A certified paralegal may receive credit for continuing education activities in which live instruction or recorded material is used. Recorded material includes videotaped or satellite transmitted programs, and programs on CD-ROM, DVD, or other similar electronic or digital replay formats. A minimum of three certified paralegals must register to attend the presentation of a replayed prerecorded program. This requirement does not apply to participation from a remote location in the presentation of a live broadcast by telephone, satellite, or video conferencing equipment.

(d) A certified paralegal may receive credit for participation in a course online. An on-line course is an educational seminar available on a provider's website reached via the internet. To be accredited, a computer-based CPE course must be interactive, permitting the participant to communicate, via telephone, electronic mail, or a website bulletin board, with the presenter and/or other participants.

(e) Continuing education materials are to be prepared, and activities conducted, by an individual or group qualified by practical or academic experience in a setting physically suitable to the educational activity of the program and, when appropriate, equipped with suitable writing surfaces or sufficient space for taking notes.

(f) Thorough, high quality, and carefully prepared written materials should be distributed to all attendees at or before the time the course is presented. These may include written materials printed from a computer presentation, computer website, or CD-ROM. A written agenda or outline for a presentation satisfies this requirement when written materials are not suitable or

readily available for a particular subject. The absence of written materials for distribution should, however, be the exception and not the rule.

(g) Any continuing legal education activity approved for lawyers by the North Carolina State Bar's Board of Continuing Legal Education meets these standards.

(h) In-house continuing legal education and self-study shall not qualify for continuing paralegal education (CPE) credit.

(i) A certified paralegal may receive credit for completion of a course offered by an ABA accredited law school with respect to which academic credit may be earned. No more than 6 CPE hours in any year may be earned by attending such courses. Credit shall be awarded as follows: 3.5 hours of CPE credit for every quarter hour of credit assigned to the course by the educational institution, or 5.0 hours of CPE credit for every semester hour of credit assigned to the course by the educational institution.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. August 18, 2005;
Amended Eff. March 8, 2013; March 11, 2010; March 2, 2006.*

27 NCAC 01G .0203 GENERAL COURSE APPROVAL

(a) Approval – Continuing education activities, not otherwise approved or accredited by the North Carolina State Bar Board of Continuing Legal Education, may be approved upon the written application of a sponsor, or of a certified paralegal on an individual program basis. An application for continuing paralegal education (CPE) approval shall meet the following requirements:

- (1) If advance approval is requested by a sponsor, the application and supporting documentation (*i.e.*, the agenda with timeline, speaker information and a description of the written materials) shall be submitted at least 45 days prior to the date on which the course or program is scheduled. If advance approval is requested by a certified paralegal, the application need not include a complete set of supporting documentation.
- (2) If more than five certified paralegals request approval of a particular program, either in advance of the date on which the course or program is scheduled or subsequent to that date, the program will not be accredited unless the sponsor applies for approval of the program and pays the accreditation fee set forth in Rule .0204.
- (3) In all other cases, the application and supporting documentation shall be submitted not later than 45 days after the date the course or program was presented.
- (4) The application shall be submitted on a form furnished by the Board of Paralegal Certification.
- (5) The application shall contain all information requested on the form.
- (6) The application shall be accompanied by a course outline or brochure that describes the content, identifies the teachers, lists the time devoted to each topic and shows each date and location at which the program will be offered.
- (7) The application shall include a detailed calculation of the total continuing paralegal education (CPE) hours and the hours of professional responsibility for the program.
- (8) If the sponsor has not received notice of accreditation within 15 days prior to the scheduled date of the program, the sponsor should contact the Board of Paralegal Certification via telephone or e-mail.

(b) Announcement. Sponsors who have advance approval for courses from the Board of Paralegal Certification may include in their brochures or other course descriptions the information contained in the following illustration:

This course [or seminar or program] has been approved by the North Carolina State Bar Board of Paralegal Certification for continuing paralegal education credit in the amount of ____ hours, of which ____ hours will also apply in the area of professional responsibility. This course is not sponsored by the Board of Paralegal Certification.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. August 18, 2005;
Amended Eff. August 27, 2013.*

27 NCAC 01G .0204 FEES

Accredited Program Fee - Sponsors seeking accreditation for a particular program (whether or not the sponsor itself is accredited by the North Carolina State Bar Board of Continuing Legal Education), that has not already been approved or accredited by the North Carolina State Bar Board of Continuing Legal Education, shall pay a non-refundable fee of \$75. However, no fee shall be charged for any program that is offered without charge to attendees. All programs must be approved

in accordance with Rule .0203(1). An accredited program may be advertised by the sponsor in accordance with Rule .0203(2).

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. August 18, 2005;
Amended Eff. June 9, 2016.

27 NCAC 01G .0205 COMPUTATION OF HOURS OF INSTRUCTION

(a) Hours of continuing paralegal education (CPE) will be computed by adding the number of minutes of actual instruction, dividing by 60 and rounding the results to the nearest one-tenth of an hour.

(b) Only actual instruction will be included in computing the total hours. The following will be excluded:

- (1) introductory remarks;
- (2) breaks;
- (3) business meetings.

(c) Teaching – Continuing paralegal education (CPE) credit may be earned for teaching an approved continuing education activity. Three CPE credits will be awarded for each thirty (30) minutes of presentation. Repeat live presentations will qualify for one-half of the credit available for the initial presentation. No credit will be awarded for video replays.

(d) Teaching at a Qualified Paralegal Studies Program – Continuing paralegal education (CPE) credit may be earned for teaching a course at a qualified paralegal studies program, which program shall be qualified pursuant to Rule .0119(a) of this subchapter. Two CPE credits will be awarded for each semester credit (or its equivalent) awarded to the course.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Eff. August 18, 2005.

SUBCHAPTER 01H – REGISTRATION OF ATTORNEYS APPEARING PRO HAC VICE

SECTION .0100 - REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

27 NCAC 01H .0101 REGISTRATION

(a) Whenever an out-of-state attorney (the admittee) is admitted to practice pro hac vice pursuant to G.S. 84-4.1, it shall be the responsibility of the member of the North Carolina State Bar who is associated in the matter (the responsible attorney) to file with the secretary a complete registration statement verified by the admittee. This registration statement must be submitted within 30 days of the court's order admitting the admittee upon a form approved by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar.

(b) Failure of the responsible attorney to file the registration statement in a timely fashion shall be grounds for administrative suspension from the practice of law in North Carolina pursuant to the procedures set forth in Rule .0903 of subchapter D of these rules.

(c) Whenever it appears that a registration statement required by paragraph (a) above has not been filed in a timely fashion, notice of such apparent failure shall be sent by the secretary to the court in which the admittee was admitted pro hac vice for such action as the court deems appropriate.

History Note: Authority G.S. 84-23;
Adopted Eff. March 2, 2006.