

**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;  
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