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 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 five of the seven categories of activities listed below during the five years immediately preceding the date of application:

(A) Family Immigration. Representation of clients before the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and the State Department in the filing of petitions and applications.

(B) Employment Related Immigration. Representation of employers and/or aliens before at least one of the following: the N.C. Employment Security Commission, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Department of State or U.S. Information Agency.

(C) Naturalization. Representation of clients before the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and judicial courts in naturalization matters.

(D) Administrative Hearings and Appeals. Representation of clients before immigration judges in deportation, exclusion, bond redetermination, and other administrative matters; and the representation of clients in appeals taken before the Board of Immigration Appeals, Administrative Appeals Unit, Board of Alien Labor Certification Appeals, Regional Commissioners, Commissioner, Attorney General, Department of State Board of Appellate Review, and Office of Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices (OCAHO).

(E) Administrative Proceedings and Review in Judicial Courts. Representation of clients in judicial matters such as applications for habeas corpus, mandamus and declaratory judgments; criminal matters involving immigration law; petitions for review in judicial courts; and ancillary proceedings in judicial courts.

(F) Asylum and Refugee Status. Representation of clients in these matters.

(G) Employer Verification, Sanctions, Document Fraud, Bond and Custody, Rescission, Registry, and Fine Proceedings. Representation of clients in these matters.

(c) Continuing Legal Education - An applicant must earn no less than 48 hours of accredited continuing legal education (CLE) credits in topics relating to immigration law during the four years preceding application. At least 20 of the 48 CLE credit hours must be earned during the first and second year preceding application and at least 20 of the CLE hours must be earned during the third and fourth years preceding application. Of the 48 hours, at least 42 must be in immigration law; the balance may be in the related areas of federal administrative procedure, trial advocacy, evidence, taxation, family law, employment law, and criminal law and procedure.

(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;