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Continuing Legal Education Requirement for Lawyers Admitted to the New Jersey Bar in 2016

Every active lawyer is required to complete 24 credit hours of continuing legal education (CLE) every 2 years. Of those 24 credits, at least 4 credits must be in ethics and/or professionalism. A “newly admitted lawyer” is defined by the Board on Continuing Legal Education (Board) as a lawyer who becomes an active member of the New Jersey bar for the first time.

Within the general 24 credit CLE requirement, a newly admitted lawyer with a plenary license in New Jersey must obtain 15 credit hours in at least 5 of the following 9 subject areas during the newly admitted lawyer’s first full two-year compliance period: New Jersey basic estate administration; New Jersey basic estate planning; New Jersey civil or criminal trial preparation; New Jersey family law practice; New Jersey real estate closing procedures; New Jersey trust and business accounting; New Jersey landlord/tenant practice; New Jersey municipal court practice; and New Jersey law office management. Newly admitted attorneys with a limited license do not have to take the 15-credit new admit coursework.

Unless an attorney neither lives nor works in New Jersey or lives and works in another mandatory CLE jurisdiction, no less than ½ of the required credits per compliance period must be taken live with an instructor in the room; the balance may be in alternative verifiable learning (AVL) formats. (See BCLE Reg. 201:8). An attorney who lives, works, and is licensed in a mandatory CLE jurisdiction that allows for 100% AVL formats, through reciprocity, may apply those 100% AVL format courses towards compliance in New Jersey. AVL format courses include videotape, audiotape, on-line internet computer presentations, satellite simulcasts, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, internet computer self-study, or other type of remote verifiable learning format authorized by the Board. If an attorney is living and working out of state and cannot obtain the live courses related to the new admit subject areas, he or she may apply for a waiver of the live requirement. A newly admitted lawyer may obtain credit for CLE courses taken after his or her graduation from law school but before admission to the New Jersey bar towards their first compliance reporting period, so long as those courses were taken no more than 12 months prior to the lawyer’s date of admission to the New Jersey bar. Attorneys may carry over no more than 12 extra credits from the preceding compliance period into the next.

The first compliance reporting period for newly admitted lawyers begins January 1 of the year immediately following admission to the New Jersey bar. For lawyers who were admitted to the New Jersey bar in 2016, your CLE requirement will begin on January 1, 2017. Newly admitted lawyers are automatically assigned to a compliance reporting group based on their respective birthdays.

Compliance Reporting Group 1: If your birthday is between January 1 and June 30, you are in Compliance Reporting Group 1 and will report the completion of the required credits in the annual attorney registration and billing process in even-numbered years. Newly admitted lawyers in Group 1 will have a one year transitional reporting period and must obtain 12 credit hours by December 31, 2017. Of the 12 required credits, at least 2 credits must be in ethics and/or professionalism. You will certify compliance in the 2018 annual attorney registration and billing process. Your next compliance reporting period will begin on January 1, 2018 and end on December 31, 2019 and you will be required to obtain 24 credits and meet the specific newly admitted

attorney requirement. At least 4 of the 24 credits must be in ethics and/or professionalism, at least 15 credits must be in at least 5 of the 9 New Jersey specific subject areas for newly admitted lawyers, and the balance of credits in any legal, judicial, or other educational activity approved for CLE.

Compliance Reporting Group 2: If your birthday is between July 1 and December 31, you are in Compliance Reporting Group 2 and will report the completion of credits in the annual attorney registration and billing process in odd-numbered years. Newly admitted lawyers in Group 2 must obtain 24 credit hours by December 31, 2018 and will certify compliance in the 2019 annual attorney registration and billing process. At least 4 of the 24 credits must be in ethics and/or professionalism, at least 15 credits must be in at least 5 of the 9 New Jersey specific subject areas for newly admitted lawyers, and the balance of credits may be in any legal, judicial, or other educational activity approved for CLE.

A \$50 CLE noncompliance fee will be assessed against attorneys who report they did not complete the required courses by the deadline for course completion. An additional \$50 (for a total of \$100) will be assessed against attorneys who fail to complete their CLE courses within the afforded grace period or who fail to report regarding CLE compliance at all. In addition, attorneys who remain noncompliant are subject to being declared administratively ineligible to practice law in New Jersey.

The chart below may assist you in determining your CLE requirement for your first two compliance reporting periods based on your date of plenary admission to the New Jersey bar and your compliance group. Newly admitted lawyers with a limited license may use this chart but are not required to meet the 15 credit new-admit coursework.

Compliance Reporting Group 1 (birthdays from January 1 through June 30)			
Year Admitted	Requirement Begins	First Compliance Reporting Period	Second Compliance Reporting Period
2016	January 1, 2017	12 credits by 12/31/17 Transitional reporting period	24 credits by 12/31/19 Must complete new-admit requirement
2017	January 1, 2018	24 credits by 12/31/19 Must complete new-admit requirement	24 credits by 12/31/21
2018	January 1, 2019	12 credits by 12/31/19 Transitional reporting period	24 credits by 12/31/21 Must complete new-admit requirement

Compliance Reporting Group 2 (birthdays from July 1 through December 31)			
Year Admitted	Requirement Begins	First Compliance Reporting Period	Second Compliance Reporting Period
2016	January 1, 2017	24 credits by 12/31/18 Must complete new-admit requirement	24 credits by 12/31/20
2017	January 1, 2018	12 credits by 12/31/18 Transitional reporting period	24 credits by 12/31/20 Must complete new-admit requirement
2018	January 1, 2019	24 credits by 12/31/20 Must complete new-admit requirement	24 credits by 12/31/22

“Transitional reporting period” means that you have a one-year period to obtain 12 credits. At least 2 of the credits must be in ethics and/or professionalism and the balance of credits in any legal, judicial, or other educational activity accredited by the Board or another mandatory CLE jurisdiction.

“Must complete new admit requirement” means that during this 2-year reporting period you must obtain 24 credits. Of those 24 credits, at least 4 credits in must be in ethics and/or professionalism, 15 credits in any 5 of the 9 New Jersey subject areas, and the balance of credits in any legal, judicial, or other educational activity accredited by the Board.