

**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.