

DIVISION 4. MINIMUM CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

Chapter 1 Purpose and scope

Rule 2.50 Purpose of MCLE

Rules for Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) require active members of the State Bar of California to remain current regarding the law, the obligations and standards of the legal profession, and the management of their practices. A member's involuntary enrollment as inactive for failing to comply with these rules is public information available on the State Bar Web site.

Rule 2.50 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.51 Definitions

- (A) An "activity" is legal education that the State Bar approves as meeting standards for MCLE credit.
- (B) A "provider" is an individual or entity approved by the State Bar to grant MCLE credit for an educational activity.
- (C) "MCLE credit" is the number of credit hours that a member may claim to meet the requirements of these rules.
- (D) A "credit hour" is sixty minutes actually spent in an educational activity, less any time for breaks or other activities that lack educational content. A credit hour is reported to the nearest quarter hour in decimals.
- (E) An "approved jurisdiction" is recognized by the State Bar as having MCLE requirements that substantially meet State Bar standards for educational activities and computing MCLE credit hours in a manner acceptable to the State Bar. Approved jurisdictions are listed on the State Bar Web site.

Rule 2.51 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.52 Standards

To be approved for MCLE credit, an educational activity must meet State Bar standards.

- (A) The activity must relate to legal subjects directly relevant to members of the State Bar and have significant current professional and practical content.

- (B) The presenter of the activity must have significant professional or academic experience related to its content.
- (C) Promotional material must state that the activity is approved for MCLE credit or that a request for approval is pending; specify the amount of credit offered; and indicate whether any of the credit may be claimed for required MCLE in legal ethics, elimination of bias, or the prevention, detection, and treatment of substance abuse or mental illness that impairs professional competence.
- (D) If the activity lasts more than an hour, the provider must make substantive written materials available either before or during the activity. Any materials provided online must be available online for at least thirty calendar days following the activity.
- (E) Programs and classes must be scheduled so that participants are free of interruptions.

Rule 2.52 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.53 New members

- (A) A new member is permanently assigned to a compliance group on the date of admission.
- (B) The initial compliance period for a new member begins on the first day of the month in which the member was admitted. It ends when the period ends for the compliance group. If the initial period is less than the period for the compliance group, the required credit hours may be reduced as provided in these rules.¹
- (C) A new member may not claim credit for education taken before the initial compliance period.

Rule 2.53 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.54 Exemptions

- (A) The following active members are exempt from MCLE requirements, provided they claim the exemption in their assigned compliance periods using My State Bar Profile online or an MCLE Compliance Form:
 - (1) officers and elected officials of the State of California;

¹ Rule 2.72 (C).

- (2) full-time professors at law schools accredited by the State Bar of California or the American Bar Association;
 - (3) those employed full-time by the State of California as attorneys or administrative law judges on a permanent or probationary basis, regardless of their working hours, who do not otherwise practice law; and
 - (4) those employed full-time by the United States government as attorneys or administrative law judges on a permanent or probationary basis, regardless of their working hours, who do not otherwise practice law.
- (B) Members whom this rule exempts by reason of their employment with the State of California or the United States government may provide pro bono legal services through a qualified legal services project or a qualified support center.²

Rule 2.54 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.55 Modifications

A member prevented from fulfilling the MCLE requirement for a substantial part of a compliance period because of a physical or mental condition, natural disaster, family emergency, financial hardship, or other good cause may apply for modification of MCLE compliance requirements. The State Bar must approve any modification.

Rule 2.55 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Chapter 2. Compliance

Rule 2.70 Compliance groups

A member is permanently assigned to one of three compliance groups on the basis of the first letter of the member's last name at the date of admission.³ The three groups are A-G, H-M, and N-Z. The member remains in the compliance group despite any subsequent change of last name.

Rule 2.70 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

² Business & Professions Code § 6213.

³ A historical exception exists. When the MCLE program was established in 1992, members were permanently assigned to compliance groups on the basis of their last names at the time, regardless of any different last names they might have used previously.

Rule 2.71 Compliance periods

A compliance period consists of thirty-six months. It begins on the first day of February and ends three years later on the last day of January. The three compliance groups begin and end their compliance periods in different years. A member must report MCLE compliance no later than the day following the end of the compliance period. The report must be made online using My State Bar Profile or with an MCLE Compliance Form. Fees for noncompliance are set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines.

Rule 2.71 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.72 Requirements

- (A) Unless these rules indicate otherwise, a member who has been active throughout a thirty-six-month compliance period must complete twenty-five credit hours of State Bar approved education. No more than twelve and a half credit hours may be self-study.⁴ Total hours must include:
- (1) at least four hours of ethics in the legal profession;
 - (2) at least one hour dealing with the elimination of bias in the legal profession by reason of but not limited to sex, color, race, religion, ancestry, national origin, physical disability, age, or sexual orientation; and
 - (3) at least one hour of education designed to prevent, detect, and treat substance abuse or mental illness that impairs professional competence
- (B) Required education in legal ethics, elimination of bias, or the prevention, detection, and treatment of substance abuse or mental illness that impairs professional competence may be a component of an approved educational activity that deals with another topic.
- (C) A member may reduce the required twenty-five hours in proportion to the number of full months the member was inactive or exempt in the thirty-six-month compliance period. Up to half the reduced hours may be self-study.⁵ A tool for applying this formula is available at the State Bar Web site.

⁴ Rule 2.83.

⁵ Rule 2.83.

- (D) Excess credit hours may not be applied to the next compliance period.⁶

Rule 2.72 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.73 Record of MCLE

For a year after reporting MCLE compliance, a member must retain and provide upon demand and to the satisfaction of the State Bar

- (A) a provider's certificate of attendance;
- (B) a record of self-study that includes the title, provider, credit hours, and date of each activity; or
- (C) proof of exempt status.

Rule 2.73 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Chapter 3 Activities approved for MCLE credit

Rule 2.80 Attending programs and classes

A member may claim MCLE credit for attending a MCLE activity, such as a lecture, panel discussion, or law school class, in person or by technological means.

Rule 2.80 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.81 Speaking

A member may claim MCLE credit for speaking at an approved educational activity.

- (A) A principal speaker, who is responsible for preparing and delivering a program or class and its related materials, may claim
 - (1) actual speaking time multiplied by four for the first presentation; or
 - (2) actual speaking time only for each time a presentation is repeated without significant change.

⁶ But see Rule 2.93.

- (B) A panelist may claim
 - (1) either of the following for the first panel presentation:
 - (a) scheduled speaking time multiplied by four, plus the actual time spent in attendance at the remainder of the presentation; or
 - (b) when times have not been scheduled for individual speakers, an equal share of the total time for all speakers multiplied by four plus the actual time spent in attendance at the remainder of the presentation.
 - (2) actual speaking time only for each time a presentation is repeated without significant change.
- (C) A member who introduces speakers or serves as a moderator may claim only the MCLE credit available to any attendee.

Rule 2.81 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.82 Teaching

A member may claim MCLE credit for teaching a law school course.

- (A) A member assigned to teach a course may claim no more than the credit hours granted by the law school multiplied by twelve or actual speaking time for required MCLE in legal ethics, elimination of bias, or the prevention, detection, and treatment of substance abuse or mental illness that impairs professional competence.
- (B) A guest lecturer or substitute teacher may claim
 - (1) actual speaking time multiplied by four for the first presentation; or
 - (2) actual speaking time only for each time a presentation is repeated without significant change.

Rule 2.82 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.83 Self-study

A member may claim up to half the credit hours required in a compliance period for

- (A) completing activities for which attendance is not verified by a provider;
- (B) taking an open- or closed-book self-test and submitting it to a provider who returns it with a grade and explanations of correct answers; or
- (C) authoring or co-authoring written materials that
 - (1) have contributed to the member's legal education;
 - (2) have been published or accepted for publication; and
 - (3) were not prepared in the ordinary course of employment or in connection with an oral presentation at an approved educational activity.

Rule 2.83 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.84 Legal specialization

A member may claim MCLE credit for educational activities that the Board of Legal Specialization approves for certification or recertification.

Rule 2.84 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.85 Education taken while physically out of state

- (A) A member may claim MCLE credit for an educational activity authorized by an approved jurisdiction if it meets the requirements of these rules and if the member attends or does the activity outside California. A member may not claim credit for such an activity, including self-study, when physically present in California unless the State Bar has specifically approved it.
- (B) A member who qualifies for MCLE authorized by an approved jurisdiction may claim the amount of credit authorized by the jurisdiction. No special procedure is required to claim the credit.

Rule 2.85 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.86 Member credit request

A member may apply for credit for an activity directly relevant to the member's practice but not otherwise approved if the activity substantially meets State Bar standards. The application must be submitted with the appropriate fee.

Rule 2.86 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.87 Bar examinations and MPRE

A member may not claim MCLE credit for preparing for or taking a bar examination or the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE).

Rule 2.87 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Chapter 4. Noncompliance

Rule 2.90 Definition

Noncompliance is failure to

- (A) complete the required education during the compliance period or an extension of it;
- (B) report compliance or claim exemption from MCLE requirements;
- (C) keep a record of MCLE compliance⁷; or
- (D) pay fees for noncompliance.

Rule 2.90 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.91 Notice of noncompliance

- (A) A member who is sent a notice of noncompliance must comply with its terms or be involuntarily enrolled as inactive. An inactive member is not eligible to practice law.
- (B) If the notice requires the member to complete credit hours for the previous compliance period, any excess credit hours may be counted toward the current compliance period.

Rule 2.91 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

Rule 2.92 Enrollment as inactive for MCLE noncompliance

A member who fails to comply with a notice of noncompliance is enrolled as inactive and is not eligible to practice law. The enrollment is administrative and no hearing is required.

Rule 2.92 adopted effective January 1, 2008.

⁷ Rule 2.73.

Rule 2.93 Reinstatement following MCLE noncompliance

Enrollment as inactive for MCLE noncompliance terminates when a member submits proof of compliance and pays noncompliance fees. Credit hours that exceed those required for compliance may be counted toward the current period.

Rule 2.93 adopted effective January 1, 2008.