



**THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA
COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS/OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS**

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**QUALIFICATION FOR ADMISSION TO PRACTICE LAW IN
CALIFORNIA BY LAW STUDENTS
RECEIVING THEIR LEGAL EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES**

The requirements for admission to practice law in California are contained in Title 4, Division 1 of the *Rules of the State Bar of California (Admissions Rules)*. The following is a summary of the requirements for law students who have received their legal educations outside the United States. The requirements are different for those who have received a first degree in law from a law school in a foreign jurisdiction than those who may have completed study in a foreign law school, but did not receive a degree. For the specific requirements, refer to the *Admissions Rules*.

To be admitted to practice law in California, an applicant must comply with the requirements outlined in Chapter 2 of the *Admissions Rules*, which, in addition to passing the bar examination include: 1) receiving a positive moral character determination; 2) passage of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination; and, 3) being in compliance with any California court ordered child or family support obligation.

All applicants for admission are required to provide a social security number pursuant to Business and Professions Code Section 30 (California's tax enforcement provisions) and Family Code Section 17520 (Child Support Enforcement Program). An applicant who does not have a social security number because he/she does not qualify for one, may request an exemption from the requirement of providing a social security number at the time they file a registration application with the Committee of Bar Examiners (Committee). More information regarding the social security number requirement and exemption are available online on the Admissions' portion of the State Bar's Web site at www.calbar.ca.gov/admissions. Otherwise, there is no requirement of citizenship or residency.

Foreign Law Students With First Degree of Law

Law Students who received their first degree in law from a law school outside the United States must establish their eligibility to take the California Bar Examination by showing that their degree is equivalent to a Juris Doctor (JD) degree awarded by an American Bar Association (ABA) approved or California accredited law school in the United States and that they have successfully completed a year of law study at an ABA approved law school or a law school accredited by the Committee in the areas of law as outlined in the Committee's "Guidelines for Implementation of Chapter 2, Rule 4.30 of the *Admissions Rules*."

Law students in this category seeking to qualify to take the General Bar Examination must provide the following to the State Bar's Office of Admissions in Los Angeles:

1. A completed "Registration as a Foreign Educated General Applicant" form with the required registration fee of \$97.00;

2. An evaluated law degree equivalency report and a “Foreign Law Study Evaluation Summary” form, which must be completed by a credential evaluation agency approved by the Committee; and,
3. A certified transcript of all legal studies completed, which must include the beginning and ending dates of enrollment, each class taken, the grade or mark received for each class and the date the degree was awarded.

Foreign Law Students Without a First Degree of Law

Law students who completed their legal education outside the United States without receiving a qualifying first degree in law must establish their eligibility to take the California Bar Examination by showing they have: 1) successfully completed the equivalent of two years of undergraduate studies; 2) passed or established exemption from the First-Year Law Students’ Examination¹; and, 3) completed four years of legal studies in the United States.

Law students in this category seeking to qualify to take the General Bar Examination must provide the following to the State Bar’s Office of Admissions in Los Angeles:

1. A completed "Registration as a Foreign Educated General Applicant" form with the required registration fee of \$97.00;
2. An evaluated course breakdown of all post-secondary education and a “Foreign Law Study Evaluation Summary” form, which were completed by a credential evaluation agency approved by the Committee;
3. A certified transcript of all legal studies completed, which must include the beginning and ending dates of enrollment, each class taken, the grade or mark received for each class and the date of the degree, if one was awarded.

Documents in a language other than English must be accompanied by a notarized translation by a disinterested party, which is attested to with respect to accuracy.

Information provided by a credential evaluation agency regarding the completion of a law degree and number of years of study is considered advisory; the Committee reserves the right to make the final decision with regard to law study equivalency and how much credit the law student will receive toward qualifying to take the General Bar Examination.

A determination of eligibility will be made after review of all required documents and applicants will thereafter be notified of their status regarding eligibility to take the California Bar Examination, exemption from the First-Year Law Students’ Examination or the requirement to take the First-Year Law Students’ Examination, and whether any additional course work is required.

¹ First-Year Law Students’ Examination exemption is established by passing the bar examination of another jurisdiction or successfully completing the first year of law study at an ABA approved or California accredited law school.