

## **DRAFT RULE OF COURT**

### **Rule [XX]. Provisional Licensure of 2020 Law School Graduates**

#### **(a) State Bar Provisional Licensure Program**

- (1) The State Bar shall administer a program for provisionally licensing eligible 2020 Law School Graduates through June 1, 2022. The program shall be referred to as the “Provisional Licensure Program.”
- (2) The Provisional Licensure Program shall terminate on June 1, 2022, unless the California Supreme Court extends that date.
- (3) Upon termination of the Provisional Licensure Program, no one who was provisionally licensed pursuant to this rule shall be permitted to continue to practice as a Provisionally Licensed Lawyer, nor shall they represent that they remain provisionally licensed or are otherwise authorized to practice law in the State of California unless they have been admitted to the practice of law in California after meeting all criteria for admission including passage of the California Bar Examination, or are otherwise authorized to practice law in this state other than under this rule. The temporary authorization to practice under supervision under the Provisional Licensure Program does not confer either a plenary license or any vested or implied right to be licensed.

#### **(b) Definitions**

- (1) A “2020 Law School Graduate” means a person who became eligible to sit for the California Bar Examination under Business and Professions Code sections 6060 and 6061 between December 1, 2019 and December 31, 2020, either by graduating from a qualifying law school with a juris doctor (J.D.) or master of laws (LLM) degree during that time period, or by otherwise meeting the legal education requirements of Business and Professions Code sections 6060 and 6061 during that time period.
- (2) “Provisionally Licensed Lawyer” means a 2020 Law School Graduate who meets the eligibility criteria of this rule and is granted provisional licensure by the State Bar.
- (3) “Supervising Lawyer” means a lawyer who meets the eligibility criteria of this rule and who supervises one or more Provisionally Licensed Lawyers.
- (4) “Firm” or “law firm” means a law partnership; a professional law corporation; a lawyer acting as a sole proprietorship; an association authorized to practice law; or lawyers employed in a legal services organization or in the legal department, division, or office of a corporation, of a governmental organization, or of another organization as defined by rule 1.01 of the Rules of Professional Conduct and the commentary thereto.

#### **(c) Application Requirements**

- (1) To participate in the Provisional Licensure Program, an applicant must complete the following application requirements:

- (A) Submit an Application for Provisional Licensure with the State Bar, along with a fee of \$200, or \$55 if the applicant's sole use of the Provisional License will be in an unpaid volunteer capacity under the direction of the Supervising Lawyer;
- (B) Submit to the State Bar a declaration signed by the applicant agreeing that the applicant will be subject to the disciplinary authority of the Supreme Court of California and the State Bar with respect to the laws of the State of California and governing the conduct of lawyers, and attesting that the applicant will not practice California law other than under the supervision of a Supervising Lawyer during the time the applicant is provisionally licensed under this rule; and attesting that the applicant will not practice law in a jurisdiction where to do so would be in violation of laws of the profession in that jurisdiction.
- (C) Submit to the State Bar a declaration signed by a Supervising Lawyer who meets the requirements of this rule attesting that the applicant is employed by or volunteers at, or has a conditional offer to be employed by or volunteer with the firm where the Supervising Lawyer works and that the firm has an office located in California; that the nature of the employment conforms with the requirements of this rule; whether the employment is paid or unpaid; and that the Supervising Lawyer meets the eligibility requirements of and will comply with this rule.

(2) An Application for Provisional Licensure may be denied if:

- (A) An applicant fails to comply with eligibility or application requirements;
- (B) In connection with the Application for Provisional Licensure, an applicant makes a statement of material fact that the applicant knows to be false or makes the statement with reckless disregard as to its truth or falsity; or
- (C) In connection with the Application for Provisional Licensure, an applicant fails to disclose a fact necessary to correct a statement known by the applicant to have created a material misapprehension in the matter, except that this rule does not authorize disclosure of information protected by Business and Professions Code section 6068, subdivision (e) or rule 1.6 of the California Rules of Professional Conduct.

#### **(d) Eligibility Requirements**

To qualify as a Provisionally Licensed Lawyer under this rule, the applicant must:

- (1) Meet all of the requirements for admission to the State Bar, except the applicant need not have passed the California Bar Examination, nor have obtained a positive moral character determination, so long as the applicant submitted a complete Application for Determination of Moral Character to the State Bar prior to submission of an Application for Provisional Licensure and that application has not resulted in issuance of an adverse moral character determination by the State Bar;

- (2) Comply with any rules or guidelines adopted by the State Bar relating to the State Bar's Provisional Licensure Program;
- (3) Be employed by, or have a conditional offer of employment from a firm that has an office located in California; and
- (4) Practice law under a Supervising Lawyer who is an active licensee in good standing of the State Bar, who satisfies the requirements for serving as a Supervising Lawyer under this rule.

**(e) Responsibilities of Provisionally Licensed Lawyer**

A Provisionally Licensed Lawyer must comply with all of the following requirements. Failure to comply with these requirements shall result in immediate termination from the Provisional Licensure Program:

- (1) Complete the State Bar New Attorney Training program, as described in State Bar Rule 2.53, by the conclusion of the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer's first year of provisional licensure, unless they would otherwise be exempt from this requirement under the State Bar Rules if they were admitted to the State Bar as a lawyer;
- (2) Expressly refer to themselves orally, including but not limited to, in conversations with clients or potential clients, and in writing, including but not limited to, in court pleadings or other papers filed in any court or tribunal, on letterhead, business cards, advertising, and signature blocks, as a Provisionally Licensed Lawyer and/or participant in the State Bar's Provisional Licensure Program, and not describe themselves as a fully licensed lawyer, or imply in any way orally or in writing that they are a fully licensed lawyer;
- (3) Include on every document the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer files in court or with any other tribunal the following information about the Supervising Lawyer: name, mailing address, telephone number, and State Bar number;
- (4) Maintain with the State Bar a current email address and an address of record that is the current California office address of the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer's firm;
- (5) Report to the State Bar immediately upon termination of supervision by the Supervising Lawyer for any reason;
- (6) Report to the State Bar any information required of lawyers by the State Bar Act, such as that required by Business and Professions Code sections 6068(o) and 6068.8(c), or by other legal authority;
- (7) If reassigned to a new Supervising Lawyer for the same firm, submit a declaration from the new Supervising Lawyer in compliance with (c)(1)(C) and obtain State Bar approval before the new Supervising Lawyer assumes supervisory responsibility over the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer.

- (8) Submit a new Application for Provisional Licensure and obtain State Bar approval before beginning employment with a new firm;
- (9) Abide by the laws of the State of California relating to the practice of law, the California Rules of Professional Conduct, and the rules and regulations of the State Bar.

**(f) Prohibition on Accessing Client Trust Accounts**

While practicing law under this rule, the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer must not open, maintain, withdraw funds from, deposit funds into, or attempt to open, maintain, or withdraw from or deposit into any client trust account.

**(g) Permitted Activities**

Subject to all applicable rules, regulations, and statutes, a Provisionally Licensed Lawyer may provide legal services to a client, including but not limited to appearing before a court or administrative tribunal, drafting legal documents, contracts or transactional documents, and pleadings, engaging in negotiations and settlement discussions, and providing other legal advice and counsel, provided that the work is performed under the supervision of a Supervising Lawyer.

**(h) Communications and Work Product**

For purposes of applying the privileges and doctrines relating to lawyer-client communications and lawyer work product, the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer shall be considered a subordinate of the Supervising Lawyer and thus communications and work product of the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer shall qualify for protection under such privileges and doctrines on the same basis.

**(i) Supervision**

- (1) To meet the requirements of this rule, a Supervising Lawyer must:
  - (A) Work for the same firm by which the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer is or will be employed or at which the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer is or will be volunteering;
  - (B) Have practiced law for at least four years in any United States jurisdiction and have actively practiced law in California for at least two years immediately preceding the time of supervision, and be a licensee in good standing of the State Bar of California;
  - (C) Exercise competence in the area of California law in which they are supervising the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer, consistent with the requirements of rule 1.1 of the Rules of Professional Conduct;
  - (D) Not be inactive in California, or ineligible to practice, actually suspended, under a stayed suspension order, or have resigned or been disbarred in any jurisdiction;

- (E) Disclose in writing, via email or other means, at the outset of representation or before the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer begins to provide legal services, that a Provisionally Licensed Lawyer and/or participant in the State Bar's Provisional Licensure Program may provide legal services related to the client's matter;
  - (F) Be prepared to assume personal representation of the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer's clients if the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer becomes ineligible to practice under this rule or is otherwise unavailable to continue the representation;
  - (G) Agree to assume professional responsibility for any work that the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer performs under this rule; and
  - (H) Agree to notify the State Bar of California, in writing, within 10 calendar days if the Supervising Lawyers becomes aware or reasonably should have become aware that:
    - i. The Provisionally Licensed Lawyer has terminated employment;
    - ii. The Provisionally Licensed Lawyer is no longer eligible for participation in the Provisional Licensure Program;
    - iii. The Supervising Lawyer no longer meets the requirements of this rule;
    - iv. The Supervising Lawyer is no longer supervising the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer; or
    - v. The Supervising Lawyer has changed their office or email address.
- (2) A Supervising Lawyer may delegate some or all day-to-day supervisory responsibilities or supervisory responsibilities related to certain practice areas or assignments to another lawyer in the same organization who otherwise meets the requirements for Supervising Lawyers, without the need for those additional supervisors to file a declaration with the State Bar. The Supervising Lawyer's obligations under (i)(1)(G) are not affected by any such delegation

**(j) Termination of Provisional Licensure**

- (1) A Provisionally Licensed Lawyer's provisional license terminates:
- (A) Upon imposition of any sanction for misconduct by the State Bar of California or any other professional or occupational licensing authority, including administrative or stayed suspension against the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer;
  - (B) Upon imposition of any sanction for misconduct by the State Bar of California or any other bar, including administrative or stayed suspension, against the Supervising Lawyer, unless the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer has, within 15 calendar days of

imposition of such sanction, obtained approval from the State Bar for a new Supervising Lawyer as required by this rule;

(C) Upon initial issuance of an adverse moral character determination by the State Bar. If the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer requests a review of the adverse determination under rule 4.47.1 of the Rules of the State Bar or appeals the adverse moral character determination of the Committee under rule 4.47 of the Rules of the State Bar, in lieu of termination the provisional license shall be suspended until final resolution of the review or appeal.

(D) Upon admission to the State Bar of California;

(E) Upon cessation of the Provisional Licensure Program;

(F) Upon request of the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer;

(G) For failure to complete the State Bar New Attorney Training Program consistent with (e)(1)(A) of this rule;

(H) For failure to pay any fees required by the State Bar; or

(I) If the Provisionally Licensed Lawyer no longer meets the requirements of this rule.

(2) A notice of termination is effective ten calendar days from the date of receipt. Receipt is deemed to be five calendar days from the date of mailing to a California address or emailing to the provisional licensee's email address of record; 10 calendar days from the date of mailing to an address elsewhere in the United States; and twenty calendar days from the date of mailing to an address outside the United States. Alternatively, receipt is when the State Bar delivers a document physically by personal service or otherwise.

(3) A Provisionally Licensed Lawyer whose provisional licensure terminated upon request or upon imposition of discipline against the Supervising Lawyer may be reinstated if they meet all eligibility and application requirements of this rule.

#### **(k) Public Records**

State Bar records for Provisionally Licensed Lawyers, including office address and discipline records, are public to the same extent as State Bar records related to fully licensed lawyers.

#### **(l) Inherent Power of Supreme Court**

Nothing in these rules may be construed as affecting the power of the Supreme Court to exercise its inherent jurisdiction over the practice of law in California.