

PA CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION BOARD



News for Immediate Release

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Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education Board Announces Increases in Ethics Requirement and Distance Learning Options

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education Board has announced changes in rules and regulations that will permit more credits to be earned via distance learning, and will increase the annual ethics requirement.

By Supreme Court order, Pa.R.C.L.E. Rule 108 (e) has been changed to increase the amount of credits lawyers may earn via alternate delivery methods from four (4) to six (6) credits annually. The board also adopted a regulation change to increase the ethics component of the annual CLE requirement from one (1) to two (2) credit hours. The total number of CLE credits required annually will remain 12 hours.

The amendments to the rules and regulations will take effect with CLE compliance periods that begin in 2014 and have requirement deadlines in 2015.

The ethics credit increase marks the first significant modification to the CLE requirement since 1996 when the total requirement expanded from nine credits to 12. The new provisions for distance learning will provide lawyers the option of completing up to half of their annual requirement through distance learning and computer-based education.

Both changes are the result of considerable research and consideration by the PACLE Board.

“These updates to the rules and regulations for CLE in Pennsylvania recognize the changing needs and realities of modern law practice,” said Kenneth Argentieri, CLE Board Chair. “We hope that these changes will help lawyers to better serve their clients and the administration of justice in our Commonwealth. Ethics and professionalism is at the heart of what we do. Since accredited providers of CLE in Pennsylvania continue to do an excellent job of offering ample quality ethics and professionalism training, attorneys should easily be able to meet the new ethics requirement.”

“This is even more so with the increase in the amount of credits that can be earned through distance learning programs,” Chairman Argentieri added. “Participation through distance learning has been an option for Pennsylvania lawyers since 2003. Since then the Board has received feedback from attorneys to consider increasing the amount of distance learning credits that may apply to the CLE requirement. The Supreme Court’s decision to amend this rule responds to these requests and recognizes evolving comfort levels with the online delivery of professional education.”

The CLE board is responsible for administering the rules pertaining to continuing education for attorneys. This responsibility includes monitoring each attorney’s compliance with the requirements, notifying attorneys of CLE status, and accrediting CLE providers and courses.

The bBoard’s website is home to several online tools that help attorneys locate educational opportunities and track their CLE compliance. To access these services, and for more information on Continuing Legal Education in Pennsylvania, please visit: www.pacle.org.

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