



**The North Carolina State Bar
Board of Legal Specialization**

PO Box 25908

Raleigh, NC 27611

(919) 828-4620

www.nclawspecialists.gov

**2017
Application for Certification as a
Specialist**

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INSTRUCTIONS

North Carolina State Bar Application for Certification as a Specialist

1. **Standards** - Read the North Carolina Plan of Legal Specialization and the standards for certification in your specialty area. These materials are found at 27 N.C.A.C. 1D, Sect. 1700 *et seq.* and are published in the North Carolina State Bar *Lawyer's Handbook* and on our website, www.ncbar.gov.
2. **Fees** - A filing fee of \$250 must accompany this application. All checks should be payable to the North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization. Rejection or withdrawal of an application does not entitle an applicant to a refund of the fee or any part of the fee. **Applications postmarked by June 15, 2017, will qualify for a \$50 discount on the application fee.** An additional exam fee of \$150 will be due and payable upon notification that an applicant is eligible to take a specialty examination.
3. **Filing Timeliness** - The completed application shall be considered timely filed if the application is delivered to the offices of the North Carolina State Bar before 5:00 p.m. on July 7, 2017, or is postmarked no later than July 7, 2017.
4. **INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING APPLICATION**
 - A. **PLEASE ANSWER EACH QUESTION.** If additional space is needed to answer a question, please attach sheets to the application.
 - B. **WAIVER of STRICT COMPLIANCE** – If an applicant cannot meet the strict requirements for substantial involvement or CLE for a specialty, the applicant may request a waiver of strict compliance. To do so, you must complete the Request for a Waiver of Strict Compliance Form, available on the website, <http://www.nclawspecialists.gov/for-lawyers/forms/>, and submit the form with your application. If you prefer to receive an early decision, a Request for a Waiver of Strict Compliance Form may be submitted for review before completing the application. Email the completed form to lheidbrink@ncbar.gov.
 - C. **REFERENCES** - Each applicant for certification is asked to submit the names and addresses of 10 references in support of his or her application. It is preferred that references have experience in or are substantially involved in the specialty as that term is defined in the certification standards. The extent of a reference's involvement in the applicable specialty and relationship to the applicant will be considered in the evaluation process. All references will be contacted by the North Carolina Board of Legal Specialization or its representatives and be asked to complete written peer reference statements. A minimum of five peer reference statements must be returned to the Board in order for an application to advance. Reference forms will be sent to the email or mailing address you provide; please confirm with each reference that the email or mailing address you provide is correct. The Board, or its representatives, may contact, in person or by telephone, any reference listed by an applicant, or any lawyer or judge qualified to evaluate the applicant's competence and qualification in the specialty area. You are encouraged to advise your peer references (judges and lawyers) that you have listed them on this application and to confirm that they are willing to respond to a peer reference request.
 - D. **SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION FORMS** - Please note the specialties marked with an asterisk (*) on the following page require a supplemental application form to be submitted with the application. The forms are labeled by specialty and are available on the website, <http://www.nclawspecialists.gov/for-lawyers/forms/>.
5. **Confidentiality** - All information contained in the application, supporting documents, peer reference information, statements, and examination results shall be confidential unless otherwise subject to the North Carolina Public Records Act. Such information, however, shall be available for use by the Board, the appropriate specialty committee, or any appropriate body or tribunal in the event of an appeal.
6. **Processing of Completed Applications** - Only completed applications will be reviewed by the Board of Legal Specialization. Each applicant will be notified by email of acceptance or rejection of his or her application. An application is incomplete if it does not include complete answers to every question on the application and copies of all documents requested in the application.

7. **Filing Application** - Applications should be delivered to the State Bar or postmarked no later than July 7, 2017, and addressed to:

**North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization
Attn: Director
PO Box 25908
Raleigh, NC 27611**

Or hand delivered to: 217 E. Edenton Street, Raleigh, 27601

8. **Examination** – Upon the Board's determination that an applicant is qualified to sit for a specialty exam, an email with examination and registration information will be sent to the applicant. The exam schedule is online at: <http://www.nclawspecialists.gov/for-lawyers/the-specialty-exams/>. Examination results are provided by mail. Additional exam fees apply for joint certification with national certifying agencies in bankruptcy and elder law.

9. **Special Testing Accommodations for Disabled Applicants** - A written request for special accommodations, supported by documentation of disability, must be submitted to the program director at least two weeks prior to the exam.



The North Carolina State Bar
Board of Legal Specialization

APPLICATION FOR INITIAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

Please check the specialty (or subspecialties) for which you are applying:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appellate Practice* | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Bankruptcy Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Bankruptcy Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Real Property Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Law - State* | <input type="checkbox"/> Residential Real Property Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Law - Federal/State* | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security Disability Law* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Law - Juvenile Delinquency* | <input type="checkbox"/> Trademark Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elder Law * | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Estate Planning and Probate Law* | <input type="checkbox"/> Workers' Compensation Law* |

Please list any specialty in which you are already certified: _____

* Supplemental Application Form Required (available at <http://www.nclawspecialists.gov/for-lawyers/forms/>)

Name as Listed with North Carolina State Bar Membership	Date Admitted to the North Carolina State Bar
Preferred Name for Specialization Directory	North Carolina State Bar Number

I. Information for the Specialization Directory*

A.

Address				
City	State	Zip Code	Telephone	
Email Address				
Current Firm or Employer Name and Address				
City	State	Zip Code	Telephone	Number of Lawyers with Firm or Employer

*** IMPORTANT: If you are certified, your official address and contact information on record with the membership department of the State Bar will be used in the Specialist Directory and on our website unless you notify us otherwise. Any updates reported to State Bar membership will not automatically update in the specialization database. Changes must be reported directly to specialization staff.**

B. If you have been certified as a specialist by any organizations **other than** the North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization, list the name and date of each certification and identify the certifying organization:

Name of Certification	Date of Certification	Certifying Organization

C. How did you hear about the North Carolina State Bar certification program?

- Colleague
 Newsletter
 Listserv
 State Bar Website
 Journal/Lawyer's Weekly Ad

Other (please indicate): _____

II. States of Licensure

List all states in which you are licensed to practice law.

Do not list North Carolina or provide a letter of good standing for North Carolina. Apply for a letter of good standing from each state listed below. Request that the letter be mailed directly to the North Carolina Board of Legal Specialization.

State	Date of Admission	Membership Number	Member in Good Standing? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No*
State	Date of Admission	Membership Number	Member in Good Standing? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No*

* If not a member in good standing, provide an explanation.

III. Professional Conduct *

A. Since your admission to the North Carolina State Bar, have you been disbarred, suspended from practice, reprimanded, censured, sanctioned or otherwise disciplined or disqualified (including the revocation of a pro hac vice admission, or a disability or administrative suspension) by a licensing agency, court, or professional organization for conduct as a lawyer or as a member of any profession or organization, or as a holder of any office, public or private? Include court orders and letters of warning and caution in your response.

- Yes No

B. Are there any such actions pending (unresolved) against you?

- Yes No (Skip to Question D.)

C. For each such action (pending or resolved), state the following:

(1) The disciplinary agency, court, or professional organization: _____

(2) Date of notice to you if unresolved or date of discipline, sanction, disqualification, or other such action, if resolved: _____

(3) If discipline, sanction, or disqualification was issued, attach copy of the order or record of such action along with a written explanation.

D. List all malpractice actions filed against you since initial licensure regardless of whether the action is currently pending or resolved. With regard to each action, state or provide the following (attach additional sheets if necessary):

(1) Name of action:

(2) Date of filing and venue of action:

(3) Explanation of status or resolution:

* Documentation of disciplinary history does not have to be attached to this application if you send a letter to the relevant disciplinary agency, court or professional organization requesting that the documentation be sent directly to the North Carolina Board of Legal Specialization. A copy of the letter making such request must be attached to this application.

IV. Substantial Involvement*

Instructions: Please review the substantial involvement requirements for your specialty. The requirements can be found at <http://www.nclawspecialists.gov/for-lawyers/certification-standards/>. To qualify for certification, the applicant's practice in the area of law for which certification is sought must equal to or exceed the substantial involvement requirements set forth in the standards for the applicable specialty. Please indicate hours of substantial involvement per year (do not use percentages) and describe your practice during the calendar years listed below. If you do not meet the requirements, in order for your application to be processed, you must complete a Request for a Waiver of Strict Compliance Form which can be found on the website, <http://www.nclawspecialists.gov/for-lawyers/forms/>. The waiver request is subject to specialty committee and board approval. If you prefer to receive an early decision, a Request for a Waiver of Strict Compliance Form may be submitted for review before completing the application. Email the completed form to lheidbrink@ncbar.gov.

Number of total years you have practiced in this specialty area _____

2012

Approximate number of hours devoted to the specialty practice area: _____
Brief description of substantive legal work or practice equivalent:

2013

Approximate number of hours devoted to the specialty practice area: _____
Brief description of substantive legal work or practice equivalent:

2014

Approximate number of hours devoted to the specialty practice area: _____
Brief description of substantive legal work or practice equivalent:

2015

Approximate number of hours devoted to the specialty practice area: _____
Brief description of substantive legal work or practice equivalent:

2016

Approximate number of hours devoted to the specialty practice area: _____

Brief description of substantive legal work or practice equivalent: _____

2017 to date

Approximate number of hours devoted to the specialty practice area: _____

Brief description of substantive legal work or practice equivalent: _____

* Attach additional pages if necessary.

V. Continuing Legal Education

CLE activities must be completed between January 1, 2014 and October 1, 2017. Your CLE record will be obtained from the North Carolina State Bar CLE Department. Please attach a page listing any courses that you plan to take after filing this application as well as any of the following that you would like to be considered for specialization credit which are not included in your North Carolina State Bar CLE record:

- **Lectures** prepared and presented at an accredited CLE course;
- **Teaching** in the specialty field at an academic institution;
- **Publication** of a scholarly article in the specialty field;
- **Self-study** review of audio or video tapes, or manuscripts of lectures from qualified CLE courses (no more than two hours per year shall qualify).
- **Advanced academic coursework** (attendance at courses of instruction at a law school which can be credited toward an advanced degree in the specialty field).

VI. Peer References

Identify as references 10 lawyers or judges who are familiar with your competence and qualifications in the specialty. Insofar as possible, select persons who are board certified specialists in the specialty or substantially involved in the area as that term is defined in the certification standards. All references must be licensed and in good standing to practice law in North Carolina (with the exception of the social security disability specialty). You may not use as a reference persons who are your partners or associates or your relatives by blood or marriage, or who are involved with you in a continuing commercial relationship. Applicants for certification in bankruptcy law may not use a bankruptcy judge as a reference. Applicants for certification in immigration law must list at least two peer references who are lawyers or judges with substantial experience in immigration law. Applicants for social security disability law may list references licensed and in good standing to practice law in any jurisdiction in the United States. Members of the Board of Legal Specialization and members of the applicable specialty committee may not serve as references. A complete list of committee members is included in the application. You are encouraged to advise your peer references (lawyers and judges) that you have listed them on this application and to confirm that they are willing to respond to a peer reference request. **Use full names (not nicknames) when listing references.** Peer reference forms will be sent to the email or address you provide; please confirm with your reference that the email or address you list is correct.

1.

Name	Firm/Employer	Mailing Address	
City	State/Zip	Phone	Email

2.

Name	Firm/Employer	Mailing Address	
City	State/Zip	Phone	Email

3.

Name	Firm/Employer	Mailing Address	
City	State/Zip	Phone	Email

4.

Name	Firm/Employer	Mailing Address	
City	State/Zip	Phone	Email

5.

Name	Firm/Employer	Mailing Address	
City	State/Zip	Phone	Email

6.

Name	Firm/Employer	Mailing Address	
City	State/Zip	Phone	Email

7.

Name	Firm/Employer	Mailing Address	
City	State/Zip	Phone	Email

8.

Name	Firm/Employer	Mailing Address	
City	State/Zip	Phone	Email

9.

Name	Firm/Employer	Mailing Address	
City	State/Zip	Phone	Email

10.

Name	Firm/Employer	Mailing Address	
City	State/Zip	Phone	Email

PLEASE DO NOT LIST CURRENT BOARD OR COMMITTEE MEMBERS AS REFERENCES
(Prohibition applies only to specialty for which you are applying.)

Specialization Board Members (who are lawyers and judges) as of April 3, 2017

Laura D. Burton, Chair
Robert A. Mason, Vice-Chair
Kimberly R. Coward

Robert A. Ponton
Larry H. Rocamora
Judge Teresa H. Vincent

North Carolina State Bar Specialty Committee Members as of April 3, 2017

Appellate Practice Committee

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Christopher G. Browning, Jr.
Michelle D. Connell
Lisa S. Costner
Judge Richard D. Dietz
Justice Robert H. Edmunds
Tobias S. Hampson
Preston O. Odom, III
Matthew W. Sawchak

Bankruptcy Law Committee

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John C. Bircher, III
Don R. Kight, Jr.
Jennifer Adams Ledford
Travis P. Sasser
Robyn R.C. Whitman

Criminal Law Committee

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Barrett O. Poppler
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Delinquency Committee**

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John W. Cox, Jr.
Anna M. Goodwin
Eric J. Zogry

Elder Law Committee

Letha S. McDowell-Chair
Mark E. Edwards
Lisa Salines-Mondello
Anthony D. Nicholson
Andrew W. Olsen
Brent W. Stephens
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Law Committee**

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Helen L. Parsonage
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Alison R. Cayton
Frank W. Erwin
John M. Harris
Joseph (J.C) Hearne, II
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James W. Williams, III

**Social Security Disability Law
Committee**

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Andrea G. Farmer
Charlotte Hall
Vance Edward Jennings
Virginia A. Noble
Michelle C. Pritchard
Kevin D. Rodgers

Trademark Law Committee

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Angela P. Doughty
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David W. Sar
Edward L. Timberlake, Jr.

Utilities Law Committee

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ToNola A. Brown-Bland
Charles A. Castle
Kimberly W. Duffley
William E. Grantmyre
Daniel C. Higgins
James H. Jeffries, IV
Peter H. Ledford
Susan W. Rabon
Gisele L. Rankin
Jo Anne Sanford
Michael D. Youth

**Workers' Compensation Law
Committee**

Michael W. Bertics-Chair
Collins Barwick, III
Gina E. Cammarano
H. George Kurani
Annemarie Pantazis
Elizabeth "Stewart" Poisson
Joel K. Turner
Chip Vincent, III

ACKNOWLEDGMENT/RELEASE

I have read the rules of the North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (the Board) and the standards for the specialty. I agree to comply with the rules and the standards for the specialty.

I understand that I cannot be certified as a specialist in more than two fields of law.

I agree to pay all fees required by the Board when due.

I understand that the period of certification is five years. If I become a certified specialist and desire to continue my certification, I must comply with the standards regarding continued certification as a specialist.

By this application, I release from any and all liability and extend absolute immunity to The North Carolina State Bar, and all individuals, committees, and institutions in any way involved in this certification process including references and informants.

I specifically authorize the Board or any specialty committee acting on its behalf to consult with any persons who may have information relating to my professional qualifications, credentials or character, mental or emotional stability, ethics, behavior, or any other matter reasonably bearing on the criteria for initial and continued certification. This authorization includes inspecting and obtaining any writing that may be material to my certification. I hereby authorize release of any information and writing, whether privileged or not, requested by the specialty committee and/or the Board. I understand that all information received and made part of my file shall be treated confidentially.

- **Applicant's Initials:** _____

I hereby consent to the disclosure of any information relating to any grievance filed against me with the North Carolina State Bar and authorize the release of any information relating thereto to the Board for the purpose of evaluating this application for certification. I will update the Board regarding the status of the grievance until resolved.

- **Applicant's Initials:** _____

By executing this release, I acknowledge that I am specifically authorizing the North Carolina State Bar and the disciplinary authorities of any other jurisdiction in which I am/or was licensed to provide to the Board any and all information concerning disciplinary complaints filed against me, even if confidential.

- **Applicant's Initials:** _____

I understand that board certification is a voluntary program and has no effect on my eligibility to practice law in any area of practice even if I am denied certification.

- **Applicant's Initials:** _____

I understand that the peer review process cannot serve its purpose unless the individuals from whom information is requested are guaranteed complete confidentiality. By applying for certification, I expressly agree to waive any right to request any information obtained through peer review at any stage of the certification process.

- **Applicant's Initials:** _____

I understand that board certification, if obtained, may be automatically revoked pursuant to the rules regulating the specialization program of the North Carolina State Bar. I agree to surrender any certificate of specialty certification if revoked.

- **Applicant's Initials:** _____

I understand that the specialization exams* will be administered using ExamSoft /SoftTest software. I understand that I will need to download the software onto my computer two weeks prior to taking the computerized exams. Additional information about computer specifications and registration information will be available in August.

*All specialty practice areas except bankruptcy and elder law.

Submission of this application and its attachments constitutes the applicant's verification of the truth of all statements and representations contained herein.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

(For applicant use only- do not send in this checklist with your application.)

- I have read and initialed all applicable items on the Acknowledgement/Release section of the application.
- I have signed and dated the Acknowledgement/Release section of the application.
- I have enclosed a check for the \$250 application fee made payable to the North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization. **Applications postmarked by June 15, 2017, will qualify for a \$50 discount on the application fee.** I understand that this fee is nonrefundable regardless of the disposition of my application. I agree to pay an additional fee of \$150 upon notice I am eligible to take a specialty examination. Additional exam fees apply for joint certification with national certifying agencies in bankruptcy and elder law.
- I have included an application supplement form for my application in:
 - Appellate Practice
 - Criminal Law-Federal, State and Juvenile Delinquency
 - Elder Law
 - Estate Planning and Probate Law
 - Social Security Disability Law
 - Workers' Compensation Law
- I have included a Request for a Waiver of Strict Compliance Form (if applicable).
- If applicable, I have requested that a letter of good standing be sent to the North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization from any state, other than North Carolina, in which I am licensed to practice law.
- I have provided a copy of any letter(s) sent to a disciplinary agency, court or professional organization (including the North Carolina State Bar Grievance Department) requesting documentation of grievance history and /or any applicable information requested in Section III.
- I have made a copy of this application and any attachments for my records.