

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS

Guidelines for Seeking Waiver of the ABA-Approved Law School Degree Requirement Pursuant to Maryland Rule 19-201(b)

The Standard Educational Requirement

A candidate is eligible to take the Maryland Bar examination only if he or she has completed the pre-legal education necessary to meet the minimum requirements for admission to an American Bar Association (ABA) approved law school AND has earned a Juris Doctor degree (or its equivalent) from a law school approved by the ABA. (See Maryland Rule 19-201(a) and the Annotated Code of Maryland, Business Occupations and Professions, Section 10-207(d).)

Waiver of the Standard Educational Requirement

The State Board of Law Examiners (“SBLE”) has the discretion to waive the standard educational requirement for any person who has passed the bar examination of another U.S. state and is a member in good standing of the Bar of that State and, in the Board’s opinion is qualified by reason of education, experience, or both to take the bar examination. (See Maryland Rule 19-201(b)(1).) SBLE also has the discretion to waive the standard educational requirement for applicants receiving their first legal degree (J.D. or equivalent) from a non-U.S. law school AND who is admitted to practice law in a non-U.S. jurisdiction AND who also obtains an LL.M. from an American Bar Association accredited law school. (See Maryland Rule 19-201(b)(2) and Board Rule 7. <http://www.mdcourts.gov/ble/pdfs/baradmissionrules.pdf>)

The LL.M. must meet the requirements of Board Rule 7 and ALL DOCUMENTATION CITED IN BOARD RULE 7 MUST BE SUBMITTED with the waiver request.

THE LAW SCHOOL MUST BE CONSULTED REGARDING THE DOCUMENTATION NEEDED so that all documentation may be submitted together.

Procedure to Seek a Waiver Pursuant to Maryland Rule 19-201(b)

Submit a waiver request in the form of a letter addressed to: State Board of Law Examiners, 2011-F Commerce Park Drive, Annapolis, MD 21401. The waiver request letter must include (a) a detailed description of your pre-legal education indicating the name and location of each college or university attended, the date of graduation (if any), and the degree(s) obtained (if any); (b) a detailed description of your legal education indicating the name and location of each law school(s) attended and the date of your law school graduation; and (c) a detailed description of any experience you have in the practice of law.

The waiver request letter must be accompanied by the following documents:

1. A current, original Certificate of Admission to the Bar issued by a the highest court of a U.S. state or the appropriate issuing authority of a non-U.S. jurisdiction AND a current, original Certificate of Good Standing issued by the appropriate authority in that U.S. state or non-U.S. Jurisdiction. *Please note that in many U.S. states the Certificate of Admission and the Certificate of Good Standing are combined in a single document. LLM applicants should submit a document that is the equivalent of the Certificate of Good Standing in his/her home country.*

2. A letter from the proper authority certifying that you have taken and passed the Bar examination in the U.S. state or non-U.S. jurisdiction issuing the Certificate(s) described in #1, above. *LLM applicants admitted to the bar of their non-U.S. jurisdiction without examination should include in the request letter a citation to the authority serving as the basis for their admission to the non-U.S. Bar.*

3. An official transcript from each undergraduate college or university attended reflecting all of the courses taken, the number of semester hours of credit earned, and the degree(s) awarded, if any.

4. An official transcript from each law school attended reflecting all of the course taken, the number of semester hours of credit earned, and the degree(s) awarded, if any.

*5. If the waiver is based on an LLM degree pursuant to Rule 19-201(b)(2), all of the above, plus all of the documentation required by Board Rule 7 (to be furnished by the law school awarding the LLM). *For LLM applicants only, SBLE will accept copies of document, including non-U.S. scholastic transcripts contained in the applicant’s LSAC file provided to the U.S. law school.*

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS

Guidelines for Seeking Waiver of the ABA-Approved Law School Degree Requirement Pursuant to Maryland Rule 19-201(b)

All supporting documents should accompany your waiver request letter when filed. Except as set forth below, SBLE will deny your request if you fail to submit all required documentation with your waiver request letter. Original documents are required. Absent specific permission granted for good cause, photocopied, scanned and faxed supporting documents are not acceptable. You must contact the proper official and request documents authenticated with appropriate seals and/or original signatures.

Special Note Regarding Transcripts: If your college or the law school has a policy of not releasing official transcripts to students, you must request that the college or law school send the transcripts directly to SBLE. Advise SBLE in writing that your transcripts will be sent directly to this office by the college or law school. SBLE must receive transcripts supplied directly by the institution on or before the waiver request deadline, below.

Deadlines for Waiver Requests: The State Board of Law Examiners requires adequate time to review and consider your credentials PRIOR to permitting you to file a Bar Application:

For a July examination, the waiver request and all documentation must be received in this office no later than 4:30p.m. on the preceding April 20th.

For a February examination, the request for a waiver and all documentation must be received in this office no later than 4:30 p.m. on the preceding November 20th.

The waiver request and accompanying documents should be mailed or delivered to:

STATE BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS
2011-F Commerce Park Drive
Annapolis, MD 21401

Notification of Waiver Approval: When your file is complete, the State Board of Law Examiners will review it. After a review of the documentation accompanying your request, the State Board of Law Examiners will make its determination and notify you whether you qualify for a waiver. When the Board makes a decision, a letter will be mailed you with the Board's decision and instructions to complete SBLE's online electronic Bar application ("eBar").

Please Note: Your waiver request letter must contain a return address if you wish to receive a response. If you have questions, please call (410) 260-3640.