

Maryland Judiciary

Analysis of Case Processing Performance in the Court of Appeals

September Term, 2019



Administrative Office of the Courts

November 2020

Analysis of Case Processing Performance in the Court of Appeals September Term, 2019

Introduction

The Court of Appeals adopted case time standards effective for its 2013 September Term, 2013 (the period spanning September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2014). The case processing goals adopted by the Court provide that all cases argued^a (or filed, depending on the appeal type) during a Term are to be decided before the Term's completion. This goal is similar to that of the Supreme Court of the United States and is an expansion of the Judiciary's commitment, which began in the trial courts, to ensure timely adjudication for all those with business before the courts. Case time standards are central to the Maryland Judiciary's mission to provide fair, efficient, and effective justice for all.

This report contains performance results for the September Term, 2019.

Methodology

Case processing performance in the Court of Appeals is based on all cases argued (or filed for certain types of appeals) during the Court's September Term, 2019.^b The Court's case time standards begin at the date of *argument* for appeals on its Regular Docket, Certified Questions of Law, and Attorney Grievance Cases, and at *filing* for Extraordinary Writs and Bar Admissions. See Appendix for the complete table of case time standards in the Court of Appeals.

Prior to the Court of Appeals' transition to the Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) case management system, research staff would review the Court's docket sheets at the end of the term. With the Court of Appeals transition to MDEC, research staff pull data directly from the case management system and then enter the pertinent data fields from all cases filed or argued during the September 2019 Term, including case number, caption (case title), argument date, filing date, and disposition date (opinion, dismissal, or other order/disposition) into data analysis software. Data quality checks were performed comparing the data entry to the docket sheets and to the electronic record in the Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) system.

Research staff calculated the number and percentage of appeals disposed within standard as a proportion of the total number of cases argued or filed (depending on the appeal type) during the Court's September Term, 2019. Average and median case processing times for all disposed cases were also computed.

^a The Court of Appeals typically hears cases from September through June.

^b The Court disposed of a number of cases during the period examined (September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2020) that did not contain an argument. These cases were not subject to this analysis.

Performance Results

The Court of Appeals achieved the case time standard goal in each of the appeal types during the September Term, 2019. See Tables 1 and 2. Sixty-four Regular Docket cases were disposed within the Term and took an average of 124 days from argument to disposition. The next largest number of cases were Extraordinary Writs, in which 33 filed within September Term, 2019 reached disposition within the Term, taking an average of 21 days from filing to disposition.

All four Attorney Grievance cases that contained arguments were decided within the Term, taking an average of 84 days from argument to disposition. There were two Bar Admission cases filed in the Court in the September Term, 2019; each was disposed within that Term, taking an average of 155 days from filing to disposition. For the September 2019 Term, there were three Certified Question of Law argued, and they took an average of 119 days to dispose.

Table 1. Cases Disposed Within Time Standard Goals, Court of Appeals, September Term, 2019

Case Type	Time Standard	Judiciary Goal	September Term, 2019 Cases ^{1,2}	Number of Cases Disposed Within Standard	% Within Standard
Regular Docket	Argument to Disposition	Cases argued must be decided before the end of the term (100%)	64	64	100%
Certified Questions of Law			3	3	100%
Attorney Grievances			4	4	100%
Extraordinary Writs	Filing to Disposition	Cases filed must be decided before the end of the term (100%)	33	32	100%
Bar Admissions			2	2	100%

¹ The number of September Term, 2019 cases represent either the number of cases (1) argued or (2) filed, depending on the appeal type.

² There was an Extraordinary Writs appeal in the September Term, 2019 that was not perfected, and therefore not included in this analysis.

Table 2. Overall Average & Median Case Processing Times, Court of Appeals, September Term, 2019

Case Type	Time Standard	September Term, 2019 Average & Median Case Times (in days)	
		Average	Median
Regular Docket	Argument to Disposition	124	112
Certified Questions of Law	Cases argued must be decided before the end of the term.	119	74
Attorney Grievances		84	82
Extraordinary Writs	Filing to Disposition	21	9
Bar Admissions	Cases filed must be decided before the end of the term.	155	155

APPENDIX: Court of Appeals Case Time Standards

Court of Appeals Case Time Standards

Proceeding/Appeal Type	Standard	Case Time Start	Stay Begins (Suspends the standard)	Stay Ends	Case Time Stop	Comments
Regular Docket	Cases argued in term must be decided before end of term.	Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Disposition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion Filed Dismissed Order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Policy beginning with the 2013 Term (September 1, 2013 – August 31, 2014)
Extraordinary Writs	Cases must be decided before end of term.	Filing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Disposition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion Filed Dismissed Order 	
Bar Admissions	Cases must be decided before end of term.	Filing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Disposition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion Filed Dismissed Order 	
Certified Questions of Law	Cases argued in term must be decided before end of term.	Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Disposition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion Filed Dismissed Order 	
Attorney Grievances	Cases argued in term must be decided before end of term.	Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Disposition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion Filed Dismissed Order 	