

## **TITLE 2. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LICENSEES**

### **DIVISION 4. MINIMUM CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION**

*Last amended effective November 14, 2024.*

#### **Chapter 1. Purpose and scope**

##### **Rule 2.50 Purpose of MCLE**

Rules for Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) require active licensees of the State Bar of California to remain current regarding the law, the obligations and standards of the legal profession, and the management of their practices. A licensee's involuntary enrollment as inactive for failing to comply with these rules is public information available on the State Bar website.

##### **Rule 2.51 Definitions**

- (A) An "MCLE activity" is minimum continuing legal education that is accredited by the State Bar as meeting the standards for MCLE credit.
- (B) An "LSMCLE" activity is legal specialty minimum continuing legal education that is accredited by the State Bar as meeting the standards for LSMCLE and MCLE credit as set forth in rule 3.114. Any requirements for an MCLE activity as set forth in these rules apply to an LSMCLE activity.
- (C) A "provider" is an individual or entity approved by the State Bar to grant MCLE or LSMCLE credit for MCLE or LSMCLE activity.
- (D) "MCLE credit" is the number of credit hours that a licensee may claim to meet the requirements of these rules.
- (E) A "credit hour" is sixty minutes actually spent in an MCLE activity. A credit hour is reported to the nearest quarter hour in decimals, and includes time for introductory and concluding remarks and for questions and answers. Time spent in breaks or lunch periods, and participating in any nonlegal education functions, including but not limited to networking, business meetings, tours, or demonstrations is not activity that may be applied to a credit hour or receive MCLE credit.
- (F) An "approved jurisdiction" is recognized by the State Bar as having MCLE requirements that substantially meet State Bar standards for MCLE activities and computing MCLE credit hours in a manner acceptable to the State Bar. Approved jurisdictions are listed on the State Bar website.

- (G) A “participatory activity” is an MCLE or LSMCLE activity for which the provider must verify attendance. Participatory activities may be presented in person or delivered by electronic means.
- (H) A “self-study activity” is any MCLE activity identified in rule 2.83. Self-study activities may be presented in person or delivered by electronic means.

#### **Rule 2.52 MCLE activities**

To receive MCLE credit, a licensee must complete an MCLE activity that meets State Bar standards set forth in rule 3.601.

#### **Rule 2.53 New licensees**

- (A) A new licensee is permanently assigned to a MCLE compliance group on the date of admission.
- (B) The initial MCLE compliance period for a new licensee begins on the first day of the month in which the licensee was admitted. It ends when the period ends for the compliance group. If the initial period is less than the period for the compliance group, the required credit hours may be reduced as provided in these rules.<sup>1</sup>
- (C) A new licensee may not claim credit for education taken before the initial compliance period.

#### **Rule 2.54 Exemptions**

- (A) The following active licensees are exempt from MCLE requirements, provided they claim the exemption in their assigned compliance periods using My State Bar Profile online or an MCLE Compliance Form:
  - (1) officers and elected officials of the State of California;
  - (2) full-time professors at law schools accredited by the State Bar of California or the American Bar Association;
  - (3) those employed full-time by the State of California on a permanent or probationary basis, regardless of their working hours, who do not otherwise practice law; and
  - (4) those employed full-time by the United States government on a permanent or probationary basis, regardless of their working hours, who do not otherwise practice law.

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<sup>1</sup> Rule 2.72 (C).

- (B) Licensees whom this rule exempts by reason of their employment with the State of California or the United States government may provide pro bono legal services through a California qualified legal services project or a qualified support center,<sup>2</sup> or through a legal services project or support center that primarily provides legal services without charge to indigent persons in another jurisdiction and is funded by the Legal Services Corporation or the Older Americans Act or receives funding administered by the jurisdiction's interest on lawyers trust accounts program.

## **Rule 2.55 Modifications**

A licensee prevented from fulfilling the MCLE requirement for a substantial part of a compliance period because of a physical or mental condition, natural disaster, family emergency, financial hardship, or other good cause may apply for modification of MCLE compliance requirements. Compliance requirements remain in effect unless a modification is approved by the State Bar.

## **Chapter 2. Compliance**

### **Rule 2.70 Compliance groups**

A licensee is permanently assigned to one of three compliance groups on the basis of the first letter of the licensee's last name at the date of admission.<sup>3</sup> The three groups are A-G, H-M, and N-Z. The licensee remains in the compliance group despite any subsequent change of last name.

### **Rule 2.71 Compliance periods**

A compliance period consists of no less than thirty-six months. The compliance period begins on the commencement date set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines and ends no less than thirty-six months later on the day before the compliance deadline as set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines. The three compliance groups begin and end their compliance periods in different years. A licensee must report MCLE compliance no later than the day following the end of the compliance period. The report must be made online using My State Bar Profile or with an MCLE Compliance Form. Fees for noncompliance are set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines.

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<sup>2</sup> Bus. & Prof. Code, § 6213.

<sup>3</sup> A historical exception exists. When the MCLE program was established in 1992, licensees were permanently assigned to compliance groups on the basis of their last names at the time, regardless of any different last names they might have used previously.

## Rule 2.72 Requirements

- (A) Until December 31, 2021, all licensees shall be subject to the following:
- (1) Unless these rules indicate otherwise, a licensee who has been active throughout a thirty-six-month compliance period must complete twenty-five credit hours of MCLE activities. No more than twelve and a half credit hours may be self-study.<sup>4</sup> Total hours must include no less than 6 hours as follows:
    - (a) at least four hours of legal ethics;
    - (b) at least one hour dealing with the recognition and elimination of bias in the legal profession and society by reason of, but not limited to, sex, color, race, religion, ancestry, national origin, physical disability, age, or sexual orientation; and
    - (c) at least one hour of education addressing substance abuse or other mental or physical issues that impair a licensee's ability to perform legal services with competence.
  - (2) Required education in legal ethics, elimination of bias, or competence issues may be a component of an approved MCLE activity that deals with another topic.
  - (3) A licensee may reduce the required twenty-five hours in proportion to the number of full months the licensee was inactive or exempt in the thirty-six-month compliance period. Up to half the reduced hours may be self-study.<sup>5</sup> A tool for applying this formula is available at the State Bar website.
  - (4) Excess credit hours may not be applied to the next compliance period.<sup>6</sup>
- (B) On and after January 1, 2022, all licensees shall be subject to the following:
- (1) Licensees reporting for the compliance periods ending January 31, 2022, shall be subject to the requirements set forth in paragraphs (A)(1), (A)(2), (A)(3), and (A)(4) for the compliance period ending January 31, 2022.
  - (2) Beginning with the compliance period ending January 31, 2023, all licensees shall comply with the following:

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<sup>4</sup> Rule 2.83.

<sup>5</sup> Rule 2.83.

<sup>6</sup> But see rule 2.93.

- (a) Unless these rules indicate otherwise, a licensee who has been active throughout a thirty-six-month compliance period must complete twenty-five credit hours of MCLE activities. No more than twelve and a half credit hours may be self-study.<sup>7</sup> Total hours must include no less than 7 hours as follows:
  - (i) at least four hours of legal ethics;
  - (ii) at least two hours dealing with the recognition and elimination of bias in the legal profession and society by reason of, but not limited to, sex, color, race, religion, ancestry, national origin, physical disability, age, or sexual orientation;
    - 1. Of those two hours, at least one hour must focus on implicit bias and the promotion of bias-reducing strategies to address how unintended biases regarding race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics undermine confidence in the legal system; and
  - (iii) at least one hour of education addressing substance abuse or other mental or physical issues that impair a licensee's ability to perform legal services with competence.
- (b) Required education in legal ethics, elimination of bias, or competence issues may be a component of an approved MCLE activity that deals with another topic, consistent with the requirements of rule 2.52(F).
- (c) A licensee may reduce the required twenty-five hours in proportion to the number of full months the licensee was inactive or exempt in the thirty-six-month compliance period, except that the requirements of paragraphs (B)(2)(a)(ii) and (B)(2)(a)(iii) may not be reduced to less than one hour each. Up to half the reduced hours may be self-study.<sup>8</sup> A tool for applying this formula is available at the State Bar website.
- (d) Excess credit hours may not be applied to the next compliance period.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Rule 2.83.

<sup>8</sup> Rule 2.83.

<sup>9</sup> But see rule 2.93.

- (C) On and after January 1, 2024, all licensees shall be subject to the following:
- (1) Licensees reporting for the compliance period ending January 31, 2024, shall be subject to the requirements set forth in paragraphs (B)(1) and (B)(2) for the compliance period ending January 31, 2024.
  - (2) Beginning with the compliance period ending January 31, 2025, all licensees shall comply with the following:
    - (a) Unless these rules indicate otherwise, a licensee who has been active throughout a thirty-six-month compliance period must complete twenty-five credit hours of MCLE activities. No more than twelve and a half credit hours may be self-study.<sup>10</sup> Total hours must include no less than 10 hours as follows:
      - (i) at least four hours of legal ethics;
      - (ii) at least two hours dealing with the recognition and elimination of bias, one hour of which must focus on implicit bias and the promotion of bias-reducing strategies;
      - (iii) at least two hours of education addressing competence, one hour of which must focus on prevention and detection;
      - (iv) at least one hour of education addressing technology in the practice of law; and
      - (v) at least one hour of education addressing civility in the legal profession.<sup>11</sup>
    - (b) Required education in legal ethics, elimination of bias, or competence, technology in the practice of law, and civility in the legal profession may be a component of an approved MCLE activity that deals with another topic, consistent with the requirements of rule 2.52(F).
    - (c) A licensee may reduce the required twenty-five hours in proportion to the number of full months the licensee was inactive or exempt in the thirty-six-month compliance period, except that the requirements of paragraphs (C)(2)(a)(ii) and (C)(2)(a)(iii) may not be reduced to less than one hour each. Up to half the reduced hours

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<sup>10</sup> Rule 2.83.

<sup>11</sup> See rule 3.601 regarding the content requirements for these credit hours.

may be self-study.<sup>12</sup> A tool for applying this formula is available at the State Bar website.

- (d) Excess credit hours may not be applied to the next compliance period.<sup>13</sup>

### **Rule 2.73 Record of MCLE**

For a year after reporting MCLE compliance, a licensee must retain and provide upon demand and to the satisfaction of the State Bar

- (A) a provider's certificate of attendance;
- (B) a record of self-study that includes the title, provider, credit hours, and date of each MCLE activity; or
- (C) proof of exempt status.

## **Chapter 3. MCLE activities approved for MCLE credit**

### **Rule 2.80 Attending programs and classes**

A licensee may claim MCLE credit for attending a MCLE activity, such as a lecture, panel discussion, or law school class, in person or by technological means.

### **Rule 2.81 Speaking**

A licensee may claim participatory MCLE credit for speaking at an approved MCLE activity.

- (A) A principal speaker, who is responsible for preparing and delivering a program or class and its related materials, may claim
  - (1) actual speaking time multiplied by four for the first presentation; or
  - (2) actual speaking time only for each time a presentation is repeated without significant change.
- (B) A panelist may claim
  - (1) either of the following for the first panel presentation:
    - (a) scheduled individual speaking time multiplied by four, plus the actual time spent in attendance at the remainder of the presentation; or

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<sup>12</sup> Rule 2.83.

<sup>13</sup> But see rule 2.93.

- (b) when times have not been scheduled for individual speakers, an equal share of the total time for all speakers multiplied by four plus the actual time spent in attendance at the remainder of the presentation.
  - (2) actual speaking time only for each time a presentation is repeated without significant change.
- (C) A licensee who introduces speakers or serves as a moderator may claim only the MCLE credit available to any attendee.

### **Rule 2.82 Teaching**

A licensee may claim participatory MCLE credit for teaching a law school course.

- (A) A licensee assigned to teach a course may claim no more than the credit hours granted by the law school multiplied by twelve or actual speaking time for required MCLE in legal ethics, elimination of bias, or competence issues.
- (B) A guest lecturer or substitute teacher may claim
  - (1) actual speaking time multiplied by four for the first presentation; or
  - (2) actual speaking time only for each time a presentation is repeated without significant change.

### **Rule 2.83 Self-study**

A licensee may claim up to half the credit hours required in a compliance period for

- (A) completing MCLE activities for which attendance is not verified by a provider and the MCLE activities were prepared within the preceding five years;
- (B) taking an open- or closed-book self-test and submitting it to a provider who returns it with a grade and explanations of correct answers; or
- (C) authoring or co-authoring written materials that
  - (1) have contributed to the licensee's legal education;
  - (2) have been published or accepted for publication; and
  - (3) were not prepared in the ordinary course of employment or in connection with an oral presentation at an approved MCLE activity.



**Rule 2.84 Mock trial, moot court, and other competition activity**

- (A) A licensee may claim up to two hours of participatory MCLE credit for serving as an attorney coach or scorer or presiding judge for mock trials, moot court arguments, negotiation competitions, arbitration competitions, and mediation competitions involving substantive and procedural law at the middle, high school, college, graduate, and law school levels.
- (B) MCLE credit hours are not available for grading written briefs or other written papers in connection with this type of MCLE activity.
- (C) Additional hours cannot be claimed for preparation time.
- (D) A licensee may not claim MCLE credit for legal ethics, elimination of bias, competence, technology in the practice of law, or civility in the legal profession as required by rule 2.72 for participation in this type of activity.

**Rule 2.85 Education taken while physically out of state**

- (A) A licensee may claim MCLE credit for an MCLE activity authorized by an approved jurisdiction if it meets the requirements of these rules and if the licensee attends or does the MCLE activity outside California. A licensee may not claim credit for such an activity, including self-study, when physically present in California unless the State Bar has specifically approved it.
- (B) A licensee who qualifies for an MCLE activity authorized by an approved jurisdiction may claim the amount of credit authorized by the jurisdiction. No special procedure is required to claim the credit.

**Rule 2.86 Licensee credit request**

A licensee may apply for MCLE credit for an educational activity directly relevant to the licensee's practice but not otherwise approved if the activity substantially meets State Bar standards. The application must be submitted with the appropriate fee.

**Rule 2.87 Bar examinations and MPRE**

A licensee may not claim MCLE credit for preparing for or taking a bar examination or the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE).

## **Chapter 4. Noncompliance**

### **Rule 2.90 Definition**

Noncompliance is failure to

- (A) complete the required education during the compliance period or an extension of it;
- (B) report compliance or claim exemption from MCLE requirements;
- (C) keep a record of MCLE compliance;<sup>14</sup> or
- (D) pay fees for noncompliance.

### **Rule 2.91 Notice of noncompliance**

- (A) A licensee who is sent a notice of noncompliance must comply with its terms or be involuntarily enrolled as inactive. An inactive licensee is not eligible to practice law.
- (B) If the notice requires the licensee to complete credit hours for the previous compliance period, any excess credit hours may be counted toward the current compliance period.

*Rule 2.91 adopted effective January 1, 2008; amended effective January 25, 2019.*

### **Rule 2.92 Enrollment as inactive for MCLE noncompliance**

A licensee who fails to comply with a notice of noncompliance is enrolled as inactive and is not eligible to practice law. The enrollment is administrative and no hearing is required.

### **Rule 2.93 Reinstatement following MCLE noncompliance**

Enrollment as inactive for MCLE noncompliance terminates when a licensee submits proof of compliance and pays noncompliance fees. Credit hours that exceed those required for compliance may be counted toward the current period.

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<sup>14</sup> Rule 2.73.