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Rule 704. Qualification on Examination

(a) Every applicant for the Illinois bar examination shall file with the Board of Admissions to the Bar both a character and fitness registration application and a separate application to take the bar examination. The applications shall be in such form as the Board shall prescribe and shall be subject to the fees and filing deadlines set forth in Rule 706.

(b) In the event the character and fitness registration application and the separate application to take the bar examination shall be satisfactory to the Board, the applicant shall be admitted to the examination; provided, however, that the following applicants must first receive certification of good moral character and general fitness to practice law by the Committee on Character and Fitness pursuant to Rule 708 before they will be permitted to write the bar examination: (1) applicants who have been convicted of felonies; (2) applicants against whom are pending indictments, criminal informations, or criminal complaints charging felonies; (3) applicants who have been rejected, or as to whom hearings are pending, in another jurisdiction on a ground related to character and fitness; or (4) applicants admitted to practice in another jurisdiction who have been reprimanded, censured, disciplined, suspended or disbarred in such other jurisdiction or against whom are pending disciplinary charges or proceedings in that jurisdiction.

(c) The Board of Admissions to the Bar shall conduct separate examinations on academic qualification and professional responsibility. At least two academic qualification examinations shall be conducted annually, one in February and the other in July, or at such other times as the Board, in its discretion, may determine. At least three professional responsibility examinations shall be conducted annually, one in March, another in August, and another in November, or at such other times as the Board, in its discretion, may determine. The Board may designate the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination of the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) as the Illinois professional responsibility examination. The Board may recommend for the Court's consideration and determination a proposed passing grade on both the academic qualification examination and the professional responsibility examination.

(d) The academic qualification examination, also known as the Illinois bar examination, shall be conducted under the supervision of the Board. The Illinois bar examination shall be created, prepared, and administered in a manner approved by the Court, on recommendation of the Board. The nature, location, and dates of the Illinois bar examination shall be determined by the Board, and information regarding the nature, location, and dates of the Illinois bar examination shall be posted on the Board's website and otherwise made available to interested members of the public through reasonable means. If the Board recommends that the Illinois examination be a national examination developed by the NCBE and the Court so approves, then the examination shall be administered consistent with the terms of use or policies developed by the NCBE.

(e) In the event the Board of Admissions to the Bar shall find that an applicant has achieved a passing score, as determined by the Board, on the academic and professional responsibility examinations, meets the requirements of these rules, and has received from the Committee on Character and Fitness its certification of good moral character and general fitness to practice law, the Board shall certify to the Court that these requirements have been met; the Board may also transmit to the Court any additional information or recommendation it deems appropriate.

(f) A passing score on the Illinois bar examination is valid for four years from the last date of

the examination. An applicant for admission on examination who is not admitted to practice within four years must repeat and pass the examination after filing the requisite character and fitness registration and bar examination applications and paying the fees therefor in accordance with Rule 706.

Amended effective October 2, 1972; amended April 8, 1980, effective May 15, 1980; amended June 19, 1987, effective immediately; amended June 12, 1992, effective July 1, 1992; amended May 7, 1993, effective immediately; amended July 1, 1998, effective immediately; amended July 6, 2000, effective immediately; amended December 6, 2001; effective immediately; amended October 2, 2006, effective July 1, 2007; amended June 8, 2018, eff. Mar. 1, 2019; amended May 29, 2025, eff. immediately.