

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TENNESSEE  
AT NASHVILLE

**FILED**  
01/15/2021  
Clerk of the  
Appellate Courts

**IN RE: PETITION OF THE TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON  
CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION TO AMEND TENNESSEE  
SUPREME COURT RULE 21 GOVERNING THE REQUIREMENTS OF  
CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION**

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**No. ADM2020-01728**

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**ORDER**

On December 30, 2020, the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education (“TCCLE”) filed a petition asking this Court to consider amendments to Rule 21 of the Rules of the Tennessee Supreme Court.

The Court hereby publishes the TCCLE’s petition for public comment and solicits written comments on the proposed amendments from judges, lawyers, bar associations, members of the public, and any other interested parties. The deadline for submitting written comments is Monday, May 17, 2021. Written comments should reference the docket number above and may be emailed to [appellatecourtclerk@tncourts.gov](mailto:appellatecourtclerk@tncourts.gov) or mailed to:

James Hivner, Clerk  
Re: Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 21  
100 Supreme Court Building  
401 7th Avenue North  
Nashville, TN 37219-1407

The Clerk shall provide a copy of this order, including the Appendix, to LexisNexis and to Thomson Reuters. In addition, this Order, including the Appendix, shall be posted on the Tennessee Supreme Court’s website.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

PER CURIAM

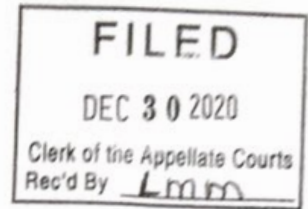
## **APPENDIX**

### **Petition of the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education to Amend Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 21**

**[New text is indicated by underlining/Deleted text is indicated by striking]**



IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TENNESSEE  
AT NASHVILLE



**PETITION OF THE TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CONTINUING LEGAL  
EDUCATION TO AMEND TENNESSEE SUPREME COURT RULE 21  
GOVERNING THE REQUIREMENTS OF  
CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION**

No: ADM 2020-01728

The Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education (the "Commission") hereby respectfully petitions this Honorable Court to amend Rule 21 governing the operations of the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education. These proposed amendments are more fully described in this Petition and in the attached **Exhibits A and B**, and they are each intended to improve, and clarify the administration of Continuing Legal Education ("CLE") for lawyers licensed to practice law in Tennessee. In support of its Petition, the Commission would respectfully show as follows:

1. The Commission and its staff are privileged to serve this Honorable Court in administering the continuing legal education system set forth in Rule 21 of this Court's Rules and its implementing regulations. The Commission has been given several responsibilities, including to "monitor developments in the operation of this Rule and to design, promulgate for discussion, test and recommend to this Court modifications to the Continuing Legal Education program in Tennessee as deemed appropriate by the Commission." *See* Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 21 § 1.02(c).

2. Rule 21 was last revised on April 25, 2019. Since the last revision to Supreme Court Rule 21 the Commission has undertaken a review of its implementing regulations and is in the process of finalizing proposed changes to renumber and realign the regulations with Rule 21.

In the process of conducting the review of the regulations it became clear to members of the Commission that certain provisions of Rule 21 required change and that other implementing provisions needed to be added to the Rule. This petition seeks to accomplish those goals and allow the Commission to finalize its redrafted regulations and present them to this Court for approval.

3. The undersigned is indebted to and recognizes the long hours of contemplation, consideration, re-consideration, vigorous discussion, drafting and re-drafting that was put in by Commission members and Commission staff to come up with this comprehensive document. The Commission is honored to present for the Court's consideration several proposed revisions to Rule 21.

4. All the proposals made herein are the result of a clear and strong consensus by the Commission that the proposals are worthy of consideration and adoption by this Honorable Court.

5. Attached to this Petition are the Commission's proposals. For ease of consideration, the Commission attaches as **Exhibit A**, a redline document that provides for a comparison of the Commission's proposals to Rule 21 as it presently reads. **Exhibit B** shows what Rule 21 would look like if all the proposed changes are accepted.

6. Many of the proposed revisions are self-explanatory and require little explanation beyond the language of the proposal itself. Other proposals offered by the Commission, may warrant additional explanation of the Commission's thoughts and considerations as to why a particular modification may be needed. As such, the Commission respectfully requests leave to provide additional reasons for its requests in the following areas:

**PROPOSED REVISIONS TO TENN. SUP. CT. R. 21, § 2.03(d)  
AUTHORIZATION TO ALLOW FOR PARTIAL YEAR EXEMPTIONS.**

Rule 21, Section 2 provides for various exemptions for attorneys. Each month at its regular meetings the Commission reviews requests from attorneys who are unable to meet their continuing legal education credit requirement for some portion of the compliance year often as the result of surgical procedures or other medical issues. Currently the rule provides for earning continuing legal education credit on an all or none basis. The current proposal would allow an attorney to have relief for the period of time that he or she is unable to earn continuing legal education credit but provide for enforcement of the Rule for the remaining portion of the compliance year. The proposed change to the rule would provide relief to the attorney and still assure that the attorney is engaged in activities that will enhance and maintain their legal competence.

**PROPOSED REVISIONS TO TENN. SUP. CT. R. 21, § 2.04 and 3.02(a) and (b)  
REQUESTS FOR ACCOMODATIONS AND EXCEPTIONAL RELIEF**

Rule 21, Section 2.04 grants the Commission the authority to grant exceptional relief for requests including requests for appropriate waivers, extensions of time, hardship, and extenuating circumstances. The proposed changes to section 2.04 and 3.02(a) and (b) would give the Commission specific authority to develop regulations addressing these types of situations and would create a single combined form for attorneys to use to request relief or accommodation.

**PROPOSED REVISIONS TO TENN. SUP. CT. R. 21, § 4.07(a)  
CORRECTING THE 2019 RULE CHANGE**

On April 25, 2019, this Court entered an order revising the language of Section 4.07 (a). Through error and inadvertence, the language of section 21 which allowed three (3) hours of Ethics and Professionalism credit annually for service on the Board of Professional Responsibility or any of its hearing committees was removed from the rule. This was not the

intent of the Commission as evidenced by the language of Rule 21, Section 5.01 (g) (9) which includes service on the Board of Professional Responsibility or any of its hearing committee as a method of obtaining live continuing legal education credit and specifically references section 4.07 as the source of eligibility for that credit. The Commission respectfully requests that the delete the current language of section 4.07 and that the prior language of the rule be reinstated.

**PROPOSED REVISIONS TO TENN. SUP. CT. R. 21, §4.08  
REVISED CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION CREDIT FOR DISCRETIONARY  
ACTIVITIES**

In the process of reviewing the provisions of Rule 21 the Commission discussed the distinction between the various types of activities receiving discretionary continuing legal education credit. The Commission is of the opinion that the credits currently allowed under the Rule are not balanced and appear to value certain activities above others. It was never the Commission's intent to express a preference for one activity above another. In addition, after hearing from advocates for attorneys who provide indigent defense representation and live in rural parts of the state who have a more difficult time finding and attending live continuing legal education programming, the Commission determined that there was not any reason to treat pro bono credit and indigent defense credit differently. The revised language would allow the same amount of credit for either pro bono or indigent defense activities

In the process of its review the Commission also became aware that the current public service credit was broader than intended based on the history of discussions around this issue. The Commission proposes to reform the language of the rule to more closely carry out the original intent of the Court.



**PROPOSED REVISIONS TO TENN. SUP. CT. R. 21, § 5.01 (f) (g) and (h)  
CLARIFICATION OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The changes to these provisions add additional clarification by stating long-standing Commission policies and regulations and mirror the new language of sections 4.07, 4.08(a) (d) and (e). The change to section h corrects the form of the verb so that the subject and verb agree.

**PROPOSED REVISIONS TO TENN. SUP. CT. R. 21, § 5.07  
ADD A NEW PROVISION TO CLARIFY THE TIMING OF REPORTS OF CLE  
ATTENDANCE**

In the last two revisions to Rule 21, the Commission has tried to tighten up the reporting requirement for submission of attendance at continuing legal education activities. This has been done because the Commission's staff has observed attendance being sought for courses that are so old that they are stale or submitted so late that it negatively impacts compliance for attorneys who completed their CLE requirement in a timely manner. Course attendance continues to be reported months and even years after the completion date of CLE courses.

**PROPOSED REVISIONS TO TENN. SUP. CT. R. 21, § 6.01, 7.02, 7.04, 7.05 and 7.06  
CLARIFICATION ON AUTHORIZATION TO PROVIDE STATEMENTS, REPORTS  
AND OTHER DOCUMENTS BY ELECTRONIC MEANS**

Rule 21 in its current form provides that the Annual Report Statement or any other notices required or provided for by Rule 21 may also be made by electronic means. The revised language to 6.01, 7.02, and 7.05 allows the Commission to provide reports by electronic means. The remaining changes to sections 7.04 and 7.06, respectively, correct a dangling sentence and add additional clarification on how an attorney establishes compliance.



**PROPOSED REVISIONS TO TENN. SUP. CT. R. 21, § 8.02(b)**  
**REQUIREMENT TO PAY FOR ATTENDANCE AT THE TIME OF REPORTING**

For over ten (10) years Rule 21 has contained a provision requiring attorneys to pay for attendance at the time the attendance is submitted. The Rule has been silent about the requirement for providers. That has resulted in providers becoming more and more lax in making timely payments for attendance that is submitted. Rule 21 Section 8.02 establishes a deadline of thirty (30) days for providers to report an attorney's attendance at a continuing legal education program. While it is reasonable and a common business practice to expect a provider to pay for that attendance at the time it is submitted, the staff of the Commission has observed that providers will submit attendance and fail to pay the reporting fee for months even after being sent reminders that the fee is due and that credits do not post to attorney records until paid. The new language makes it clear to providers that payment of attendance fees is required to assure that attorneys receive the benefit of reported attendance in a timely manner.

**CONCLUSION**

For the foregoing reasons, the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education respectfully requests that this Honorable Court grant the Commission's Petition for amendment and modification of Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 21. For the Court's convenience, the following Exhibit is referenced in, and attached to, this Petition:

- **Exhibit A** – Redline Comparison of the Commission's proposals to current Rule 21.
- **Exhibit B**- Proposed final rule with changes accepted.

Respectfully Submitted,  
**TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CONTINUING  
LEGAL EDUCATION**

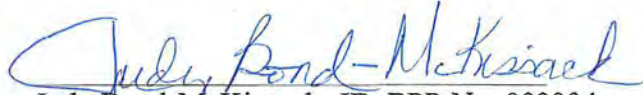
By: 

John Alexander, BPR No. 025234

Chairperson, *Tennessee Commission on CLE*

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I certify that a photocopy of this Petition was mailed, first class postage paid, to the attached list of individuals and organizations, and was posted on the Commission's web site, [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com), this \_\_ day of December, 2020.



Judy Bond-McKissack, JD, BPR No. 009004

Executive Director, *Tennessee Commission on  
Continuing Legal Education*

## **Exhibit A**

### **Rule 21: Rule for Mandatory Continuing Legal Education.**

#### **Section 1. Commission on Continuing Legal Education.**

**1.01.** There is hereby established the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education, consisting of 11 members, to be appointed by this Court. Nine (9) members shall be attorneys who are resident members of the Bar of this State (three of whom shall reside in each of the Grand Divisions of the State) and two shall be non-attorneys.

**1.02.** The Commission shall have the following duties:

(a) To exercise general supervisory authority over the administration of this Rule.

(b) To adopt regulations subject to the approval of this Court, for the enforcement and application of this Rule, not inconsistent with this Rule; and

(c) To monitor developments in the operation of this Rule, and to design, promulgate for discussion, test, and recommend to this Court modifications to the Continuing Legal Education program in Tennessee as deemed appropriate by the Commission. In furtherance of this particular responsibility, the Commission may, with prior Court approval, from time to time, adopt by regulation, after notice and an opportunity to comment to the Bar and CLE providers in Tennessee, new accreditation standards, evaluation programs, and other similar programs for trial periods not to exceed 42 months in duration.

**1.03.** All Commission members shall hold office for three (3) years and, until their successors are appointed, to staggered terms of office.

**1.04.** Any Commission vacancy shall be filled by this Court to serve until the expiration of the term in which the vacancy occurred. All members shall be eligible for reappointment for no more than one additional term.

**1.05.** Officers of the Commission shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The Chairperson shall be appointed by this Court. Each of the other officers shall be elected by members of the Commission during their first meeting of each calendar year.

**1.06.** Meetings of the Commission may be held at any time upon notification by any officer to the entire Commission. Votes may be cast concerning any action before the Commission by registering an affirmative or negative vote during a physical meeting, by electronic or telephonic means, or by mail.

**1.07.** A quorum of six (6) members shall be required for any Commission action. A majority of the members in attendance at any Commission meeting having a quorum, but no less than four (4) affirmative votes, shall be necessary to approve any action.

**1.08.** Members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for their services but may be reimbursed by the Commission for their incidental travel and other expenses in accordance with the allowances approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

**1.09.** The Court shall appoint an Executive Director of the Commission, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Court. Following his or her appointment by the Court, the Executive Director shall report to the Commission, which shall conduct regular performance evaluations of the Executive Director and report such evaluations to the Court. The Executive Director may engage such staff as may be necessary to conduct the business of the Commission within the scope of this Rule.

**1.10.** Communications to the Commission, any subcommittee thereof, or to the Commission's staff relating to the failure of any lawyer to comply with this Rule, or of any fraud upon the Commission shall be absolutely privileged, and no civil suit predicated thereon may be instituted against any complainant or a witness. Members of the Commission and its staff shall be immune from civil suit for any conduct in the course of their official duties.

## **Section 2. Scope and Exemptions.**

**2.01.** This Rule shall apply to every person whose qualifications to practice law are subject to the Rules of Professional Conduct of the Supreme Court of Tennessee. The exemptions contained herein shall apply only to the mandatory continuing legal education requirements of this Rule.

**2.02.** The practice of law shall be defined as described in Rule 9, Section 10.3(e).

**2.03** The Commission shall recognize the following exemptions:

(a) Nonresident attorneys from other jurisdictions who are temporarily admitted to practice for a case or proceeding shall not be subject to this Rule;

(b) Members of the Armed Forces on active duty shall not be subject to this Rule. Any attorney claiming active duty military exemption shall provide to the Commission a copy of his/her military orders in order to qualify for exemption. An attorney who leaves active duty military service prior to September 1st of the compliance year shall not be entitled to the military exemption for that year. This exemption shall be claimed by completing the pertinent section on the Annual Report Statement and filing the Statement with the Commission;

(c) An attorney shall not be subject to the requirements of the Rule after age seventy (70), upon claiming application of the exemption. This exemption shall not include the calendar year in which the attorney becomes seventy (70) years of age. However, any attorney who reached age sixty-five (65) on or before December 31, 2014, shall also be eligible for exemption from the requirements of this Rule pursuant to the age-related exemption granted by the version of Rule 21 in effect on December 31, 2014 upon filing an application with the Commission. This exemption shall be claimed by completing the pertinent section on the Annual Report Statement and filing the Statement with the Commission;



(d) An attorney who is licensed to practice law in Tennessee but who resided outside of the State and did not practice Tennessee law during the compliance year may request an annual exemption from this Rule. This exemption shall be requested annually by completing the pertinent section on the Annual Report Statement and filing the Statement with the Commission. The Commission shall have the authority to promulgate rules to address partial year exemptions.;

(e) Full time Tennessee law school professors who did not engage in the practice of law during the compliance year shall not be subject to this Rule.

This exemption shall be claimed annually by completing the pertinent section on the Annual Report Statement and filing the Statement with the Commission;

(f) An attorney holding an elective office in the Executive or Legislative branches of government and who is prohibited by law from practicing law or who certifies that s/he has not practiced law during the compliance year is exempt while holding such office.

This exemption shall be claimed annually by completing the pertinent section on the Annual Report Statement and filing the Statement with the Commission.

(g) All Justices, Judges, and Magistrate Judges of the federal system shall not be subject to the requirements of this Rule in view of their required comparable continuing legal education programs.

This exemption shall be claimed annually by completing the pertinent section on the Annual Report Statement and filing the Statement with the Commission.

(h) An attorney who is no longer practicing law in any United States Jurisdiction and who has placed his/her Tennessee law license on inactive status with the Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility may claim exemption from this Rule by completing and filing the Request for Inactive Status form with the Commission. The Request for Inactive Status form can be found on the CLE website – [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

**2.04.** An attorney may petition the Commission in writing for “Exceptional Relief” from this Rule, and may be granted Exceptional Relief upon majority vote of the Commission. An attorney applying for Exceptional Relief, including requests for appropriate waivers, extensions of time, hardship, and extenuating circumstances, shall file with the Commission a written statement showing cause why that individual should be considered for "Exceptional Relief" and shall specify in detail the particular relief being sought. The Commission shall have the authority to promulgate rules to address requests for exceptional relief and to determine the continuing legal education requirement for individuals with exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case-basis. The Commission shall provide a form for individuals requesting exceptional relief or accommodation, including relief for individuals with short-term, permanent or long-term disabilities under Section 3.02 (a) and (b) of this Rule. The form can be found on the CLE website – [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).



### Section 3. Continuing Legal Education Requirement.

3.01. (a) Unless otherwise exempted, each attorney admitted to practice law in the State of Tennessee shall obtain by December 31st of that compliance year a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of continuing legal education. Of those fifteen hours, three (3) hours shall be approved for ethics/professionalism credit ("EP credit") and twelve (12) hours shall be approved for General credit.

(b) All EP credit shall be designated as "Dual" credit as defined in the Commission's regulations. Dual credit shall first be applied as EP credit and any remaining credit shall be applied as General credit.

(c) Each attorney, who is not exempt ~~ferom~~ this Rule, shall earn a minimum of seven (7) hours of Live CLE credit each compliance year and may count a maximum of eight (8) hours of Distance Learning credits toward each compliance year.

(d) An attorney who is eligible for an exemption must annually file a claim of exemption on or before March 31st. Applications received after the deadline are assessed late fees in accordance with the compliance timetable included with the Annual Report Statement.

(e) An attorney who has filed a previous claim of age exemption shall not be required to file an annual exemption statement.

3.02. (a) An attorney who has a disability that prevents compliance with Section 3.01(a) may ~~annually~~ file a request for ~~S~~substitute ~~P~~program ~~B~~based ~~U~~upon ~~D~~disability with the Commission. The request must include a statement from a medical provider in support of the relief requested. Any approved plan shall be in effect for the compliance year. (not to exceed one-year) An attorney with a continuing disability shall provide an updated statement of disability, each compliance year, when filing his or her Annual Report Statement. The form for the request can be found on the CLE website – [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

~~The Request for Substitute Program Based upon Disability form can be found on the CLE website – [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).~~

~~(b) An attorney who has a disability that prevents compliance with Section 3.01(c) may file a Request for a Substitute Prom in Lieu of Attendance form and shall therein set out continuing legal education plans tailored to their specific abilities. The Commission shall review and approve or disapprove such plans on an individual basis. Denial of any requested substitute for attendance will be accompanied by reasons for the denial of the application and suggestions how the attorney might improve his or her application for an approved substitute for attendance, which makes attendance of CLE programs inordinately difficult may file a request for a substitute program in lieu of attendance and shall therein set out continuing legal education plans tailored to their specific interests and physical abilities. The Commission shall review and approve or disapprove such plans on an individual basis. Denial of any requested substitute for~~



~~attendance will be accompanied by reasons for the denial of the application and suggestions how the attorney might improve his or her application for an approved substitute for attendance.~~

~~This is a one-year exemption and must be reviewed annually using the same initial process. The Request for Substitute Program in Lieu of Attendance form can be found on the CLE website – [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com)~~

(b) An attorney who has a disability that prevents compliance with Section 3.01(c) or makes attendance of CLE programs inordinately difficult may file a request for a substitute program in lieu of attendance using the form designated in Section 2.04 and shall therein set out a continuing legal education plan tailored to their specific abilities. The Commission shall review and approve or disapprove such plans on an individual basis. Denial of any requested substitute for attendance will be accompanied by reasons for the denial of the application and suggestions on how the attorney might improve his or her application for an approved substitute for attendance. Any approved plan shall be in effect for the compliance year (not to exceed one-year) and must be reviewed annually using the same initial process. The form for the request can be found on the CLE website – [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

#### **Section 4. Continuing Legal Education Credits.**

**4.01.** Credit will be given only for continuing legal education activities approved by the Commission.

**4.02 (a)** CLE credit shall be earned by attending CLE courses approved by the Commission, subject to the limitations set forth in this Rule.

(b) Up to fifteen (15) hours of credit earned in a compliance year in excess of ~~the~~ fifteen (15) credit annual requirement may be carried forward for credit in the succeeding compliance year, but only for the succeeding compliance year. Such hours must, however, be reported~~ed~~ and paid.

(c) A maximum of eight (8) hours of Distance Learning credit will be applied to establish an attorney's compliance. A maximum of eight (8) hours of Distance Learning credit can be carried forward to the subsequent compliance year.

(d) Any attorney required to earn CLE credits who receives an~~d~~ Annual Report Statement showing less than twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits or that a fee is due shall sign and return the Annual Report Statement as directed in the Statement.

(e) CLE credit should be reported at the time that the CLE credit is earned or as soon thereafter as is practical, but no later than one year from the date that the CLE credit was earned. Failing to submit CLE credit earned in the compliance year on or before December 31st of the compliance year may result in non-compliance fees as set forth in Section 7.

**4.03. (a)** Credit may be earned through teaching in an approved continuing legal education activity. Presentations accompanied by five (5) or more pages of thorough, high quality, readable, and carefully prepared written materials will qualify for CLE credit on the basis of four



(4) hours of credit for each hour of presentation. Presentations accompanied by less than five pages of outlines, or not accompanied by written materials, will qualify for CLE credit on the basis of two (2) credits per hour of presentation. Repeat presentations qualify for one-half of the credits awarded for the initial presentation. CLE credit is earned as of the date the CLE presentation occurs.

(b) Credit may also be earned through teaching in an approved law school, or teaching law-related courses offered for credit toward a degree at the undergraduate or graduate level in an approved college, university or community college. The Commission may in its discretion award four (4) hours of CLE credit for each hour of academic credit awarded by the law school, college, university, or community college for the course(s) taught.

(c) Credit may be earned for judging or coaching moot court or a mock trial at an approved law school. Credit shall be earned at the rate of one hour of EP ~~CLE~~ credit for five (5) hours of judging or coaching. A maximum of three (3) hours of CLE credit may be earned in any compliance year.

**4.04.** Credit may be earned through formal enrollment and education of a postgraduate nature, either for credit or by audit, in an approved law school. The Commission will award one (1) credit hour for each hour of class attendance.

Online course credit is subject to the eight (8) hour per year limitation.

**4.05.** Credit may be earned through service as a bar examiner in Tennessee or in any of the sister states. The Commission will award twelve (12) hours of General ~~CLE~~ credit and three (3) hours of EP credit annually for the preparation and grading of one or more bar examination questions during a given compliance year.

**4.06.** An attorney may receive up to a maximum of twelve (12) hours of General continuing legal education credit, and a maximum of three (3) hours of EP credit, for passing the bar examination of any state or upon passage of the Uniform Bar Examination including compliance with the requirements of Supreme Court Rule 7, Sections 1.04, 3.05 and Article V. Up to six (6) hours of General credit may be given for successful passage of any examination required by a specialist certification program approved under this Rule, or the examination for admission to practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office. In addition, an attorney may receive three hours of EP credit for passing either the ethics portion of a bar examination of any state or the Multi-state Professional Responsibility Examination. The maximum credit to be earned by passing any and all bar examinations in a given compliance year is twelve (12) hours of General credit and three (3) hours of EP credit.

**4.07.** ~~The Commission may, in its discretion, award:~~

~~(a) Up to one-half of the annual requirement to attorneys for participation as members of governmental commissions, committees, or other governmental bodies, at either the state or national level, involved in formal sessions for review of proposed legislation, rules or~~



regulations. The Commission is authorized to promulgate regulations to implement this provision and to address any further public service credit.

The Commission will award three (3) hours of EP credits annually for service on the Board of Professional Responsibility or any of its hearing committees.

**4.08.** The Commission may, in its discretion, award:

(a) ~~Up to one-half of the annual requirement (six (6) General credits and one and one-half (1.5) EP credits) to attorneys for participation as members of governmental commissions, committees, or other governmental bodies, at either the state or national level, involved in formal sessions for review of proposed legislation, rules, or regulations.~~

(b) ~~Up to one-half of the annual requirement (six (6) General credits and one and one-half (1.5) EP credits) for published writings concerning substantive law, the practice of law, or the ethical and professional responsibilities of attorneys if the writing is published in approved publications intended primarily for attorneys. Credit shall be awarded in the amount of one (1) hour for every 1,000 words, not including footnotes, endnotes or citations of authority. Credit shall not be awarded to a named author when the actual principal author was another person acting under the direction or supervision of the named author. In requesting credit under this subsection, the attorney shall provide the Commission with an affidavit stating the facts of authorship.~~

(c) ~~An annual maximum of three (3) EP credits earned at the rate of one hour of credit for every five billable hours of pro bono legal representation provided through court appointment, an organized bar association program or an approved legal assistance organization, or of pro bono mediation services as required by Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 31 or the Federal Court Mediation Programs established by the United States District Courts in Tennessee. Credits awarded pursuant to this paragraph shall be exempt from the per-hour fee imposed by Section 8 of this Rule.~~

~~An “approved legal assistance organization” for the purposes of this section is an organization or professional association that (1) provides pro bono legal services and (2) is approved by this Court. An organization which receives funding from the Legal Services Corporation is presumptively approved under this section. Organizations or groups which do not provide legal assistance as their primary service or business but wish to develop an initiative or project designed specifically to provide pro bono legal services may apply to be approved by this Court under this section. Any organization seeking approval under this section must file a petition with the clerk of this Court. The Application for Tennessee Supreme Court Approval of Legal Assistance Organization form can be found on the CLE website — [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).~~

(d) ~~An attorney who provides indigent defense representation at a reduced hourly rate may receive EP credit for the uncompensated portion of the representation based upon the Commission’s formula as set out in the Request for Earned Indigent Defense Credit form. A maximum of three (3) hours of credit may be earned in any compliance year. Indigent Defense credit hours earned in a compliance year in excess of the three (3) credit annual maximum may be carried forward for credit in the succeeding compliance year, but only for the succeeding~~



compliance year and only up to three (3) credit hours. The form Request for Earned Indigent Defense Credit can be found on the CLE website — [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com)

(e) An attorney may receive a combined maximum of three (3) credits of pro bono and/or indigent defense credit in any compliance year.

(f) One (1) year of CLE credit may be awarded for completion of a bar review course. An attorney shall not receive bar review credit and bar exam credit in the same compliance year. Bar review courses earned via an approved Distance Learning format are subject to the eight (8) hour per year limitation. Online bar review courses that do not satisfy the Distance Learning format criteria will not be approved for CLE credit.

4.08 The Commission may, in its discretion, award:

(a) Up to one-half of the annual requirement (six (6) General credits and/or one and one-half (1.5) EP credits) to attorneys for participation as members of governmental commissions, committees, or other governmental bodies, at either the state or national level, involved in formal sessions for review of proposed legislation, rules or regulations pertaining to the judicial branch of government, including its proceedings, administration, and rules on practice and procedure. A maximum of six (6) General credits and one and one-half (1.5) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. The Commission is authorized to promulgate regulations to implement this provision and to address credit for service to the judiciary and the bar.

(b) Up to one-half of the annual requirement (six (6) General credits and one and one-half (1.5) EP credits) for published writings concerning substantive law, the practice of law, or the ethical and professional responsibilities of attorneys if the writing is published in approved publications intended primarily for attorneys. Credit shall be awarded in the amount of one (1) hour for every 1,000 words, not including footnotes, endnotes or citations of authority. Credit shall not be awarded to a named author when the actual principal author was another person acting under the direction or supervision of the named author. In requesting credit under this subsection, the attorney shall provide the Commission with an affidavit stating the facts of authorship.

(c) An annual maximum of six (6) EP credits, earned at the rate of one hour of credit for every five billable hours of pro bono legal representation provided through court appointment, an organized bar association program or an approved legal assistance organization, or of pro bono mediation services as required by Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 31 or the Federal Court Mediation Programs established by the United States District Courts in Tennessee, may be awarded. Credits awarded pursuant to this paragraph shall be exempt from the per-hour fee imposed by Section 8 of this Rule.

An “approved legal assistance organization” for the purposes of this section is an organization or professional association that (1) provides pro bono legal services and (2) is approved by this Court. An organization which receives funding from the Legal Services Corporation is presumptively approved under this section. Organizations or groups which do not provide legal assistance as their primary service or business but wish to develop an initiative or project designed specifically to provide pro bono legal services may apply to be approved by this Court



under this section. Any organization seeking approval under this section must file a petition with the clerk of this Court. The Application for Tennessee Supreme Court Approval of Legal Assistance Organization form can be found on the CLE website - [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

(d) An attorney who provides indigent defense representation at a reduced hourly rate may receive EP credit for the uncompensated portion of the representation based upon the Commission's formula as set out in the Request for Earned Indigent Defense Credit form. A maximum of six (6) hours of credit may be earned in any compliance year. Indigent Defense credit hours earned in a compliance year in excess of the six (6) credit annual maximum may be carried forward for credit in the succeeding compliance year, but only for the succeeding compliance year and only up to six (6) credit hours. The form Request for Earned Indigent Defense Credit can be found on the CLE website – [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com)

(e) An attorney may receive a combined maximum of six (6) credits of pro bono and/or indigent defense credit in any compliance year.

(f) One (1) year of CLE credit may be awarded for completion of a bar review course. An attorney shall not receive bar review credit and bar exam credit in the same compliance year. Bar review course credits earned via an approved Distance Learning format are subject to the eight (8) hour per year limitation. Online bar review courses that do not satisfy the Distance Learning format criteria will not be approved for CLE credit.

~~4.09. A maximum of eight (8) hours of credit per year earned in a Distance Learning format approved by the Commission pursuant to section 5.01(f) may be applied to the annual requirements.~~

#### **Section 5. Continuing Legal Education Providers.**

**5.01.** The following standards will govern the approval by the Commission of continuing legal education activities:

- (a) The activity must have significant intellectual or practical content and its primary objective must be to enhance the participant's professional competence as an attorney.
- (b) The activity must deal primarily with matters related to substantive law, the practice of law, professional responsibility, or ethical obligations of attorneys.
- (c) The activity must be offered by a provider having substantial recent experience in offering continuing legal education or demonstrated ability to organize and effectively present continuing legal education. Demonstrated ability arises partly from the extent to which individuals with legal training or educational experience are involved in the planning, instruction, and supervision of the activity.
- (d) The activity itself must be conducted by an individual or group qualified by practical or academic legal experience. The program, including the named advertised instructors, must be conducted substantially as planned, subject to emergency withdrawals and alterations.



(e) Textual materials should be made available in written or electronic form to all participants at or before the time the course is presented, unless the absence of such materials is recognized as reasonable.

(f) The activity must be conducted in a format approved by the Commission including, but not limited to, online and web based programs. All courses are accredited for one year from the date of creation and may be renewed for one additional year if the course content is current.

(g) Twelve (12) activities are eligible for Live CLE credit. See Section 3.01 for requirement. The twelve (12) activities are:

1. Traditional in-classroom courses. A maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See Section 3.01(c) of this Rule;

2. Teaching at an approved CLE activity. A maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.03(a) of this Rule (includes video re-play with a qualified commentator); ~~see Regulation 3A for commentator requirements;~~

3. Teaching at an approved educational institution. A maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits (law schools only) may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.03(b) of this Rule;

4. Pro Bono representation. A maximum of ~~three~~ six (36) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.08(c) of this Rule;

5. Indigent Defense representation (uncompensated portion only). A maximum of ~~three (3)~~ six (6) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.08(d) of this Rule;

6. Published Writing. A maximum of six (6) General and one and one-half (1.5) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.08(b) of this Rule;

7. Formal enrollment and education of a postgraduate nature for credit or audit at an approved educational institution. Credit is earned hour for hour. See section 4.04 of this Rule. For Live courses, a maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. For online courses, via an approved Distance Learning format, there is a maximum of eight (8) hours of credit each compliance year. See section 3.01(c) of this Rule;

8. Service as a Bar Examiner. A maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.05 of this Rule;

9. Service on the Board of Professional Responsibility or one of its hearing committees. Credit is limited to three (3) EP credits in any compliance year. See section 4.07 of this Rule;

~~10. Participation as a member of governmental commissions, committees, or other governmental bodies. A maximum of six (6) General and one and one-half (1.5) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.08(a) of this Rule;~~

10. Participation as a member of governmental commissions, committees, or other governmental bodies involved in formal sessions for review of proposed legislation, rules or regulations pertaining to the judicial branch of government, including its proceedings, administration and rules on practice and procedure. A maximum of six (6) General and one and one-half (1.5) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.08(a) of this Rule;

11. Completion of Bar Review course. For Live courses, a maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.06 of this



Rule. For online courses, via an approved Distance Learning format, there is a maximum of eight (8) hours of credit each compliance year. See section 3.01(c) of this Rule; and

12. Successful completion of a bar examination, specialist certification program, and/or examination for admission to practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office. A maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. Bar review course credit and bar exam credit cannot both be claimed in the same compliance year. See section 4.08(f).

(h) Two (2) categories of activities are eligible for Distance Learning CLE credit. See Section 3.01 for requirement. Those two (2) categories are:

1. “real time” or “streamed” seminars whether through “conference call” or viewed through a computer or portable video device via the internet (“webcast”), and

2. Online, computer-based audio/video presentations, whether pre-recorded or not, that provide some form of interactive component and a completion certification from the sponsor.

(i) No activity consisting solely of the viewing or hearing of pre-recorded material will be awarded credit. The following types of courses and online formats are not eligible for CLE credit: YouTube videos, self-study courses, pre-recorded courses without interactivity, courses delivered as on-demand without interactivity, and courses delivered through an electronic device without interactivity.

(j) Activities that cross academic lines, such as accounting-tax seminars, may be considered for approval.

**5.02.** Tennessee does not recognize presumptive approval status for providers.

**5.03.** Tennessee does not recognize presumptive approval for any activity or program.

**5.04.** The Commission may at any time re-evaluate a program and revoke specific approval of any particular seminar.

**5.05.** (a) Any provider desiring to advertise Commission approval of a course, program, or other activity, shall submit an application for such permission and supporting documentation electronically or on the Uniform Application for Accreditation at least forty-five (45) days prior to the date on which the course or program is scheduled. Documentation shall include a statement of the provider’s intention to comply with the accreditation standards of this Rule, copies of programs and written materials distributed to participants at the two most recently produced programs, if available, or an outline of the proposed program and list of instructors if the provider has not produced previous programs, and such further information as the Commission shall request. The staff of the Commission will advise the provider whether the activity is approved or disapproved in writing by mail or by electronic means within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the completed application.

(b) Providers denied approval of a program or activity may appeal such a decision by submitting a letter of appeal to the Executive Director within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of the notice of

disapproval. Within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the appeal, the Executive Director shall make a new decision which shall be promptly delivered to the provider. Any adverse decision may be appealed to the full Commission for final decision.

(c) Any provider may submit to the Commission the Uniform Application for Accreditation seeking approval of a program after the program is conducted. The form is available on the Becoming a Provider page on the Commission's website - [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

(d) An attorney licensed to practice in Tennessee who has attended an out-of-state CLE activity not approved in advance by the Commission shall submit a detailed agenda and speaker biographies for the purpose of obtaining accreditation of the course after the program is conducted. All rules pertaining to course accreditation shall apply.

**5.06.** (a) The provider of a continuing legal education activity approved in advance may advertise or indicate approval of an activity, as follows: "This course has been approved by the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education for a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ hours of credit."

(b) Any out-of-state provider that holds a program in Tennessee and does not obtain program accreditation shall include a statement on any program advertisement:

- (1) "This program is not accredited in Tennessee"; or
- (2) "We intend to seek accreditation for this program in Tennessee"; or
- (3) "This program is not being submitted for accreditation in Tennessee".

**5.07. Attendance at continuing legal education courses shall be reported within 30 days of the completion of the course.**

## **Section 6. Annual Report.**

**6.01.** On or before February 28 of each year, the Commission shall prepare and ~~send~~ provide an Annual Report Statement to each attorney covered by this Rule requesting information concerning the attorney's compliance with Section 3.01 of this Rule in the preceding calendar year. The Annual Report Statement may be provided 1) by a form of United States mail providing delivery confirmation, 2) through the Commission's website or shall 3) be mailed to the attorney's address as shown in the most recent registration statement filed by the attorney pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 10.1, or to the attorney's last known address as shown in the MCLE database. Service of the Annual Report Statement and any other notices required or provided for by this Rule upon any attorney may also be made by electronic means. All attorneys shall maintain a current e-mail address and provide updated information upon request from the Commission. Failure to receive the Annual Report, sent to the attorney's ~~last known address~~, does not alleviate the attorney's obligation to satisfy the requirements set forth in this Rule, including the requirements of section 6.02.



**6.02.** On or before March 31st, each attorney shall complete the Annual Report Statement, indicating his or her completion of, exemption from, or approved substitute for accredited continuing legal education during the preceding calendar year, and shall deliver the completed Annual Report Statement to the Commission. The completed Annual Report Statement shall disclose all CLE hours earned during the preceding calendar year, including any hours to be carried forward to the following year. Any attorney whose Annual Report Statement demonstrates compliance with Section 3.01 of this Rule, and whose Annual Report Statement demonstrates that all fees due the Commission for the preceding calendar year have been paid, shall be exempt from the requirement to sign and deliver to the Commission the Annual Report Statement described herein.

Any attorney who fails to meet the March 31st deadline who has not previously been assessed the one hundred dollar (\$100.00) fee for the applicable compliance year shall be assessed the one hundred dollar (\$100.00) fee on April 1st. The one hundred dollar (\$100.00) fee shall be due and payable on April 1st.

**6.03.** The Annual Report Statement shall reflect any unpaid course reporting fees and any non-compliance fee assessed pursuant to Section 7.03 along with a schedule of additional penalties which will result from continued non-compliance.

**6.04.** The files and records of the Commission are deemed confidential and shall not be disclosed except in furtherance of the duties of the Commission; statistical abstracts may, however, be drawn therefrom in an anonymous fashion. [As amended by order filed December 16, 2014, effective January 1, 2016, Section 6 replaced in its entirety.]

## **Section 7. Non-compliance and Sanctions**

**7.01.** By April 30 of each year, the Commission shall compile:

- (a) A list of those attorneys who did not timely file an Annual Report Statement for the preceding calendar year, including attorneys who failed to timely claim an exemption.
- (b) A list of those attorneys who have not complied with the requirements of Section 3.01 of this Rule for the preceding calendar year; and
- (c) A list of those attorneys who have not paid all fees due under Section 8.03 of this Rule.

**7.02.** By April 30 of each year, the Commission shall serve each attorney listed on any of the three foregoing lists a Notice of Non-Compliance requiring the attorney to remedy his/her deficiencies on or before May 31 of that year. The notice shall be served upon the attorney by ~~registered or certified mail, return receipt requested~~ electronic mail or a form of United States mail providing delivery confirmation to either, at the address shown in the most recent registration statement filed by the attorney pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 10.1 or ~~to~~ the attorney's last known address as shown in the MCLE database.



Failure to receive the Notice of Non-~~C~~compliance, sent to the attorney's last known address, does not alleviate the attorney's obligation to satisfy the requirements set forth in this Rule, including the requirements of section 7.04.

**7.03.** Each attorney who is subject to the Tennessee CLE requirements who does not satisfy the full number of required hours by December 31 of the previous compliance year shall be assessed an Initial Non-~~C~~compliance Fee of One Hundred Dollars (\$100) on January 1 immediately following the end of the compliance year. Any Initial Non-~~C~~compliance Fee shall be paid on or before March 31 of that year. If any attorney shows to the satisfaction of the Executive Director of the Commission that the Notice of Non-~~C~~compliance was erroneously issued, the Initial Non-~~C~~compliance Fee shall not be due.

**7.04.** Each attorney to whom a Notice of Non-~~C~~compliance is issued on April 30, who was not previously assessed the \$100 non-compliance fee on January 1st, shall pay to the Commission a non-compliance fee of One Hundred Dollars (\$100). Said fee shall be assessed on the Notice of Non-~~C~~compliance. In order to establish compliance, attorneys shall file a valid statement of exemption or an Affidavit of Compliance with the Commission on or before May 31 of that year showing that he or she has remedied his/her deficiencies. In addition, any attorney who receives a Notice of Non-~~C~~compliance showing a fee due to the Commission shall pay the full amount of the fee by May 31st as part of establishing his/her compliance. ~~In the event~~If by the May 31 deadline, an attorney fails to claim an exemption, ~~or~~ remedy his/her deficiencies, ~~by the May 31, deadline, fails to~~ pay any fee owing to the Commission or ~~fails to~~ timely file an Affidavit of Compliance, the attorney shall pay to the Commission an additional Continuing Non-~~C~~compliance Fee of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200). The Two Hundred Dollar Continuing Non-compliance Fee shall be due and payable on June 1st.

~~The Two Hundred Dollar Continuing Non-Compliance Fee shall be due and payable on June 1st.~~

**7.05.** On or before July 1 of each year, the Commission shall prepare a draft Suspension Order listing all attorneys who were issued Notices of Non-~~C~~compliance and who failed to remedy their deficiencies by May 31. The Commission shall submit the draft Suspension Order to the Supreme Court for informational purposes. The Commission also shall ~~mail~~ provide a copy of the draft Suspension Order to each attorney named in the draft Suspension Order by electronic mail or a form of United States mail providing delivery confirmation, by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to either the address shown in the most recent registration statement filed by the attorney pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 10.1 or to the attorney's last known address as shown in the MCLE database. Failure to receive a copy of the draft Suspension Order, sent to the attorney's last known address, does not alleviate the attorney's obligation to satisfy the requirements set forth in this Rule.

**7.06.** On or before August 10 of each year, each attorney listed in the draft Suspension Order shall file an Affidavit of Compliance in a form acceptable to the Commission showing compliance with Section 3 of this Rule for the preceding calendar year or a valid statement of exemption. Upon the Commission's approval of the Affidavit of Compliance or a valid statement of exemption and upon the attorney's payment of all outstanding fees, the Commission shall



remove the attorney's name from the list of potential suspensions contained in the draft Suspension Order.

**7.07.** On August 15 of each year, the Commission shall submit to the Supreme Court a final Suspension Order listing all attorneys with active Tennessee law licenses who failed to comply with this Rule for the preceding calendar year. Also by August 15, the Commission shall notify the Board of Professional Responsibility of the names of all licensed attorneys who have retired, taken inactive status, been suspended, or whose license to practice law in this state is otherwise inactive, and who failed to comply with the requirements of this Rule. The Supreme Court will review the final Suspension Order and, upon the Court's approval, shall enter the Suspension Order suspending the law license of each attorney listed in the order. The Board of Professional Responsibility shall not reactivate the license of any attorney whose license is suspended pursuant to this Rule until the Commission certifies completion of a program of remedial continuing legal education satisfactory to the Commission.

**7.08.** Each attorney named in the final Suspension Order entered by the Court or whose name is submitted to the Board of Professional Responsibility as ineligible for reactivation for failure to meet the requirements of this Rule shall pay to the Commission a Five Hundred Dollar (\$500) Suspension Fee as a condition of reinstatement of his or her law license. The Suspension Fee shall be paid in addition to the Initial Non-~~C~~ompliance Fee (\$100) and in addition to the Continuing Non-~~C~~ompliance Fee (\$200).

**7.09.** Payment of all fees imposed in this section shall be a requirement for compliance with this Rule.

**7.10.** An attorney suspended or made ineligible for reactivation by the Commission pursuant to this Rule may file with the Commission an application for reinstatement demonstrating compliance with Section 3.01 of this Rule. If the application is satisfactory to the Commission, if the attorney is otherwise eligible for reinstatement, and if the attorney has paid in full all fees due under this Rule, the Commission will recommend to the Supreme Court that the Court reinstate the attorney's law license.

**7.11.** An attorney may address the Commission, by telephone during the Commission's scheduled monthly meeting, in regard to a recommendation of suspension or a recommendation against reinstatement. Additionally, any attorney not finding suitable relief before the Commission may petition the Supreme Court for modification or reversal of actions of the Commission. [Added by order filed March 21, 2002.]

**7.12.** No attorney suspended under this Rule 21 may resume practice until reinstated by Order of the Supreme Court. [As amended by order filed December 16, 2014, effective January 1, 2016, Section 7 replaced in its entirety.]

## **Section 8. Financing.**

**8.01.** The Commission shall be adequately funded to enable it to perform its duties in a financially independent and responsible manner.



**8.02.** (a) Providers of CLE programs held within the State of Tennessee, as a condition of accreditation shall ~~agree to~~ remit to the Commission an alphabetical list of attendees and to pay a fee of \$2.00 per approved credit hour for paper filings and a fee of \$1.00 per approved credit hour for electronic filings for each attorney licensed in Tennessee who attends the program. This provider's fee, along with the list of attendees, shall be submitted within thirty (30) days after the program is held.

Providers submitting attendance for any course, whether held within the state or outside of the state, more than forty-five (45) days after completion of the course shall pay as a late fee one additional dollar per credit hour per attorney. All attendance shall be reported within one year of the date of the completion of the course. Attendance submitted more than one year after the date of completion of the course will not be posted.

~~(b) Information contained in the attendance report required by this section or any Commission requirement under this Rule, or obtained by the Commission through analysis or comparison of such reports or information shall be deemed confidential.~~

(b) Course attendance fees are due and shall be paid at the time the course attendance is reported. If the provider does not have a credit balance sufficient to cover the reported attendance, payment will be required. Unpaid attendance will not post to attorney records.

(c) Information contained in the attendance report required by this section or any Commission requirement under this Rule or obtained by the Commission through analysis or comparison of such reports or information shall be deemed confidential.

**8.03.** Attorneys attending approved out-of-state CLE programs, or other programs for which the sponsor does not report and pay the per-hour fee, shall be responsible for remitting their individual fees at the rates set under § 8.02. This fee shall be paid at the time of, and along with, the report of such hours. All attendance shall be reported within one year of the date of completion of the course. Attendance submitted more than one year after the date of completion of the course will not be posted.

**8.04.** The Commission will review the level of the fees at least annually and adjust the levels as necessary to maintain adequate finances for prudent operation of the Commission.

**8.05.** The Commission shall deposit all funds collected hereunder with the State Treasurer; all such funds including earnings on investments and all interest and proceeds from said funds, if any, are deemed to be, and shall be designated as, funds belonging solely to the Commission. Withdrawals from those funds shall only be made by the Commission for the purposes set forth in this Rule, and for such other purposes as this Court may from time to time authorize or direct.

#### **Section 9. Effective Dates of the Rule.**

**9.01.** The establishment of the program for Mandatory Continuing Legal Education for attorneys licensed in Tennessee took effect on January 1, 1987. This Rule shall continue until such time as the Supreme Court shall determine that its program is no longer in keeping with the Court's responsibility to the legal profession in Tennessee and the public which it serves.

**Section 10. Annual CLE Compliance Summary.**

**10.01.** Notwithstanding any other provision of this Rule to the contrary, the Commission shall publish an Annual CLE Compliance Summary of the activities of the Commission and the CLE reports and requests for exemption received by the Commission during the preceding compliance year. As part of this summary, the Commission shall report on the following topics:

- (a) The number of courses approved and rejected for accreditation;
- (b) The number of providers from whom lawyers holding a Tennessee license have received CLE credit;
- (c) The number of General and EP credit hours earned by lawyers holding a Tennessee license, both in the aggregate and in the following general categories:
  - (1) Live credit programs;
  - (2) Distance learning credit programs broken down by the following categories:
    - (i) online computer interactive;
    - (ii) webinars; and
    - (iii) telephone conference calls;
  - (3) pro bono legal representation;
  - (4) teaching;
  - (5) completion of a law-related course broken down by the following areas:
    - (i) bar review course;
    - (ii) bar exam; and
    - (iii) postgraduate course;
  - (6) service to the bar in the following areas:
    - (i) bar examiner;

(ii) governmental commissions, committees, or other governmental bodies; and

(iii) Board of Professional Responsibility or as a hearing committee member; and

(7) published author;

(d) The number of courses offered per provider and the attendance figures based on the categories above;

(e) The number of lawyers holding a Tennessee license who have been granted an exemption for the previous compliance year; and

(f) The number of requests for exceptional relief granted by the Commission during the previous compliance year.

The Commission shall also report generally on the substantive content areas in which CLE credits are being earned and reported. The Commission's report relating to the preceding compliance year shall be published on its website by October 31st.

### **Section 11. Identification of Specialists.**

**11.01.** Lawyers licensed to practice law in Tennessee may be certified as being a legal specialist by any organization that has been accredited by the American Bar Association's House of Delegates to award specialist certifications to lawyers.

**11.02.** Each lawyer who has received a certification as a specialist shall register the certification with the Commission. The Commission shall confirm that the certification presented by the specialist has been issued from an organization that has been accredited by the American Bar Association's House of Delegates to award specialist certifications to lawyers. However, the Commission shall have no authority to certify any lawyer practicing in this State as being a specialist in any area of law.

**11.03.** Upon confirmation that a lawyer has received a specialist certification from an appropriate certifying organization, the Commission shall record the following information in the form of a Roll of Certified Specialists:

(a) the lawyer's name;

(b) the lawyer's Board of Professional Responsibility registration number;

(c) the state and county in which the lawyer maintains the lawyer's principal office;

(d) the name, address, and a link to the current website of the certifying organization;

(e) the area or areas of law in which the lawyer has obtained a specialty certification; and



(f) the date on which the lawyer obtained the specialty certification.

**11.04.** Each lawyer shall renew the lawyer's registration annually with the Commission and, in so doing, shall represent that the specialty certification remains valid. If a lawyer's certification of specialty has expired, or is withdrawn or revoked for any reason, the lawyer must report such fact to the Commission within fifteen (15) days of the expiration, withdrawal, or revocation. If a lawyer fails to renew the specialty certification, or if the lawyer notifies the Commission of the expiration, withdrawal or revocation of a specialty certification, the Commission shall immediately remove the lawyer's information from the Roll of Certified Specialists.

**11.05.** No lawyer shall at any time represent that the lawyer is a specialist in any area of law without first having a current registration of a valid certification on file with the Commission.

**11.06.** The Commission shall maintain the Roll of Certified Specialists, taking special care to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of information contained therein. The Commission shall also make the Roll of Certified Specialists available for public inspection and shall publish the Roll from time to time. The Commission may satisfy the obligation to publish the Roll of Certified Specialists by maintaining the Roll on the Commission's website - [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

**11.07.** The Commission, subject to the approval of the Court, may establish and collect reasonable fees from lawyers seeking to register, or re-register, any specialty certification to offset the costs of administering the procedures set forth in this Section

[As adopted by order filed September 25, 1986 and designated by orders entered Rule 21: September 26 and 29, 1986; and amended by orders entered June 22, 1988, July 25, 1988, October 5, 1988, March 1, 1991, and October 29, 1991, April 7, 1992, April 17, 1992, July 1, 1993, December 14, 1994, September 21, 2010, April 30, 2012, effective January 1, 2012, January 11, 2013, effective July 1, 2013, and by order filed August 30, 2013, effective January 1, 2014; Amended by order filed August 18, 2014; and by order filed December 16, 2014, effective January 1, 2015; Amended by order filed April 25, 2019.]



## **Exhibit B**

### **Rule 21: Rule for Mandatory Continuing Legal Education.**

#### **Section 1. Commission on Continuing Legal Education.**

**1.01.** There is hereby established the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education, consisting of 11 members, to be appointed by this Court. Nine (9) members shall be attorneys who are resident members of the Bar of this State (three of whom shall reside in each of the Grand Divisions of the State) and two shall be non-attorneys.

**1.02.** The Commission shall have the following duties:

(a) To exercise general supervisory authority over the administration of this Rule.

(b) To adopt regulations subject to the approval of this Court, for the enforcement and application of this Rule, not inconsistent with this Rule; and

(c) To monitor developments in the operation of this Rule, and to design, promulgate for discussion, test, and recommend to this Court modifications to the Continuing Legal Education program in Tennessee as deemed appropriate by the Commission. In furtherance of this particular responsibility, the Commission may, with prior Court approval, from time to time, adopt by regulation, after notice and an opportunity to comment to the Bar and CLE providers in Tennessee, new accreditation standards, evaluation programs, and other similar programs for trial periods not to exceed 42 months in duration.

**1.03.** All Commission members shall hold office for three (3) years and, until their successors are appointed, to staggered terms of office.

**1.04.** Any Commission vacancy shall be filled by this Court to serve until the expiration of the term in which the vacancy occurred. All members shall be eligible for reappointment for no more than one additional term.

**1.05.** Officers of the Commission shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The Chairperson shall be appointed by this Court. Each of the other officers shall be elected by members of the Commission during their first meeting of each calendar year.

**1.06.** Meetings of the Commission may be held at any time upon notification by any officer to the entire Commission. Votes may be cast concerning any action before the Commission by registering an affirmative or negative vote during a physical meeting, by electronic or telephonic means, or by mail.

**1.07.** A quorum of six (6) members shall be required for any Commission action. A majority of the members in attendance at any Commission meeting having a quorum, but no less than four (4) affirmative votes, shall be necessary to approve any action.

**1.08.** Members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for their services but may be reimbursed by the Commission for their incidental travel and other expenses in accordance with the allowances approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

**1.09.** The Court shall appoint an Executive Director of the Commission, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Court. Following his or her appointment by the Court, the Executive Director shall report to the Commission, which shall conduct regular performance evaluations of the Executive Director and report such evaluations to the Court. The Executive Director may engage such staff as may be necessary to conduct the business of the Commission within the scope of this Rule.

**1.10.** Communications to the Commission, any subcommittee thereof, or to the Commission's staff relating to the failure of any lawyer to comply with this Rule, or of any fraud upon the Commission shall be absolutely privileged, and no civil suit predicated thereon may be instituted against any complainant or a witness. Members of the Commission and its staff shall be immune from civil suit for any conduct in the course of their official duties.

## **Section 2. Scope and Exemptions.**

**2.01.** This Rule shall apply to every person whose qualifications to practice law are subject to the Rules of Professional Conduct of the Supreme Court of Tennessee. The exemptions contained herein shall apply only to the mandatory continuing legal education requirements of this Rule.

**2.02.** The practice of law shall be defined as described in Rule 9, Section 10.3(e).

**2.03** The Commission shall recognize the following exemptions:

(a) Nonresident attorneys from other jurisdictions who are temporarily admitted to practice for a case or proceeding shall not be subject to this Rule;

(b) Members of the Armed Forces on active duty shall not be subject to this Rule. Any attorney claiming active duty military exemption shall provide to the Commission a copy of his/her military orders in order to qualify for exemption. An attorney who leaves active duty military service prior to September 1st of the compliance year shall not be entitled to the military exemption for that year. This exemption shall be claimed by completing the pertinent section on the Annual Report Statement and filing the Statement with the Commission;

(c) An attorney shall not be subject to the requirements of the Rule after age seventy (70), upon claiming application of the exemption. This exemption shall not include the calendar year in which the attorney becomes seventy (70) years of age. However, any attorney who reached age sixty-five (65) on or before December 31, 2014, shall also be eligible for exemption from the requirements of this Rule pursuant to the age-related exemption granted by the version of Rule 21 in effect on December 31, 2014 upon filing an application with the Commission. This exemption shall be claimed by completing the pertinent section on the Annual Report Statement and filing the Statement with the Commission;

(d) An attorney who is licensed to practice law in Tennessee but who resided outside of the State and did not practice Tennessee law during the compliance year may request an annual exemption from this Rule. This exemption shall be requested annually by completing the pertinent section on the Annual Report Statement and filing the Statement with the Commission. The Commission shall have the authority to promulgate rules to address partial year exemptions.

(e) Full time Tennessee law school professors who did not engage in the practice of law during the compliance year shall not be subject to this Rule.

This exemption shall be claimed annually by completing the pertinent section on the Annual Report Statement and filing the Statement with the Commission;

(f) An attorney holding an elective office in the Executive or Legislative branches of government and who is prohibited by law from practicing law or who certifies that s/he has not practiced law during the compliance year is exempt while holding such office.

This exemption shall be claimed annually by completing the pertinent section on the Annual Report Statement and filing the Statement with the Commission.

(g) All Justices, Judges, and Magistrate Judges of the federal system shall not be subject to the requirements of this Rule in view of their required comparable continuing legal education programs.

This exemption shall be claimed annually by completing the pertinent section on the Annual Report Statement and filing the Statement with the Commission.

(h) An attorney who is no longer practicing law in any United States Jurisdiction and who has placed his/her Tennessee law license on inactive status with the Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility may claim exemption from this Rule by completing and filing the Request for Inactive Status form with the Commission. The Request for Inactive Status form can be found on the CLE website – [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

**2.04.** An attorney may petition the Commission in writing for “Exceptional Relief” from this Rule and may be granted Exceptional Relief upon majority vote of the Commission. An attorney applying for Exceptional Relief, including requests for appropriate waivers, extensions of time, hardship, and extenuating circumstances, shall file with the Commission a written statement showing cause why that individual should be considered for “Exceptional Relief” and shall specify in detail the particular relief being sought. The Commission shall have the authority to promulgate rules to address requests for exceptional relief and to determine the continuing legal education requirement for individuals with exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case-basis. The Commission shall provide a form for individuals requesting exceptional relief or accommodation, including relief for individuals with short-term, permanent or long-term disabilities under Section 3.02 (a) and (b) of this Rule. The form can be found on the CLE website – [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

### **Section 3. Continuing Legal Education Requirement.**

**3.01.** (a) Unless otherwise exempted, each attorney admitted to practice law in the State of Tennessee shall obtain by December 31st of that compliance year a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of continuing legal education. Of those fifteen hours, three (3) hours shall be approved for ethics/professionalism credit ("EP credit") and twelve (12) hours shall be approved for General credit.

(b) All EP credit shall be designated as "Dual" credit as defined in the Commission's regulations. Dual credit shall first be applied as EP credit and any remaining credit shall be applied as General credit.

(c) Each attorney, who is not exempt from this Rule, shall earn a minimum of seven (7) hours of Live CLE credit each compliance year and may count a maximum of eight (8) hours of Distance Learning credits toward each compliance year.

(d) An attorney who is eligible for an exemption must annually file a claim of exemption on or before March 31st. Applications received after the deadline are assessed late fees in accordance with the compliance timetable included with the Annual Report Statement.

(e) An attorney who has filed a previous claim of age exemption shall not be required to file an annual exemption statement.

**3.02.** (a) An attorney who has a disability that prevents compliance with Section 3.01(a) may file a request for substitute program based upon disability with the Commission. The request must include a statement from a medical provider in support of the relief requested. Any approved plan shall be in effect for the compliance year. (not to exceed one-year) An attorney with a continuing disability shall provide an updated statement of disability, each compliance year, when filing his or her Annual Report Statement. The form for the request can be found on the CLE website – [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

(b) An attorney who has a disability that prevents compliance with Section 3.01(c) or makes attendance of CLE programs inordinately difficult may file a request for a substitute program in lieu of attendance using the form designated in Section 2.04 and shall therein set out a continuing legal education plan tailored to their specific abilities. The Commission shall review and approve or disapprove such plans on an individual basis. Denial of any requested substitute for attendance will be accompanied by reasons for the denial of the application and suggestions on how the attorney might improve his or her application for an approved substitute for attendance. Any approved plan shall be in effect for the compliance year (not to exceed one-year) and must be reviewed annually using the same initial process. The form for the request can be found on the CLE website – [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

### **Section 4. Continuing Legal Education Credits.**



**4.01.** Credit will be given only for continuing legal education activities approved by the Commission.

**4.02 (a)** CLE credit shall be earned by attending CLE courses approved by the Commission, subject to the limitations set forth in this Rule.

(b) Up to fifteen (15) hours of credit earned in a compliance year in excess of the fifteen (15) credit annual requirement may be carried forward for credit in the succeeding compliance year, but only for the succeeding compliance year. Such hours must, however, be reported and paid.

(c) A maximum of eight (8) hours of Distance Learning credit will be applied to establish an attorney's compliance. A maximum of eight (8) hours of Distance Learning credit can be carried forward to the subsequent compliance year.

(d) Any attorney required to earn CLE credits who receives an Annual Report Statement showing less than twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits or that a fee is due shall sign and return the Annual Report Statement as directed in the Statement.

(e) CLE credit should be reported at the time that the CLE credit is earned or as soon thereafter as is practical, but no later than one year from the date that the CLE credit was earned. Failing to submit CLE credit earned in the compliance year on or before December 31st of the compliance year may result in non-compliance fees as set forth in Section 7.

**4.03. (a)** Credit may be earned through teaching in an approved continuing legal education activity. Presentations accompanied by five (5) or more pages of thorough, high quality, readable, and carefully prepared written materials will qualify for CLE credit on the basis of four (4) hours of credit for each hour of presentation. Presentations accompanied by less than five pages of outlines, or not accompanied by written materials, will qualify for CLE credit on the basis of two (2) credits per hour of presentation. Repeat presentations qualify for one-half of the credits awarded for the initial presentation. CLE credit is earned as of the date the CLE presentation occurs.

(b) Credit may also be earned through teaching in an approved law school, or teaching law-related courses offered for credit toward a degree at the undergraduate or graduate level in an approved college, university or community college. The Commission may in its discretion award four (4) hours of CLE credit for each hour of academic credit awarded by the law school, college, university, or community college for the course(s) taught.

(c) Credit may be earned for judging or coaching moot court or a mock trial at an approved law school. Credit shall be earned at the rate of one hour of EP credit for five (5) hours of judging or coaching. A maximum of three (3) hours of CLE credit may be earned in any compliance year.

**4.04.** Credit may be earned through formal enrollment and education of a postgraduate nature, either for credit or by audit, in an approved law school. The Commission will award one (1) credit hour for each hour of class attendance.

Online course credit is subject to the eight (8) hour per year limitation.

**4.05.** Credit may be earned through service as a bar examiner in Tennessee or in any of the sister states. The Commission will award twelve (12) hours of General credit and three (3) hours of EP credit annually for the preparation and grading of one or more bar examination questions during a given compliance year.

**4.06.** An attorney may receive up to a maximum of twelve (12) hours of General continuing legal education credit, and a maximum of three (3) hours of EP credit, for passing the bar examination of any state or upon passage of the Uniform Bar Examination including compliance with the requirements of Supreme Court Rule 7, Sections 1.04, 3.05 and Article V. Up to six (6) hours of General credit may be given for successful passage of any examination required by a specialist certification program approved under this Rule, or the examination for admission to practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office. In addition, an attorney may receive three hours of EP credit for passing either the ethics portion of a bar examination of any state or the Multi-state Professional Responsibility Examination. The maximum credit to be earned by passing any and all bar examinations in a given compliance year is twelve (12) hours of General credit and three (3) hours of EP credit.

**4.07.**

The Commission will award three (3) hours of EP credits annually for service on the Board of Professional Responsibility or any of its hearing committees.

**4.08** The Commission may, in its discretion, award:

(a) Up to one-half of the annual requirement (six (6) General credits and/or one and one-half (1.5) EP credits) to attorneys for participation as members of governmental commissions, committees, or other governmental bodies, at either the state or national level, involved in formal sessions for review of proposed legislation, rules or regulations pertaining to the judicial branch of government, including its proceedings, administration, and rules on practice and procedure. A maximum of six (6) General credits and one and one-half (1.5) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. The Commission is authorized to promulgate regulations to implement this provision and to address credit for service to the judiciary and the bar.

(b) Up to one-half of the annual requirement (six (6) General credits and one and one-half (1.5) EP credits) for published writings concerning substantive law, the practice of law, or the ethical and professional responsibilities of attorneys if the writing is published in approved publications intended primarily for attorneys. Credit shall be awarded in the amount of one (1) hour for every 1,000 words, not including footnotes, endnotes or citations of authority. Credit shall not be awarded to a named author when the actual principal author was another person acting under the direction or supervision of the named author. In requesting credit under this subsection, the attorney shall provide the Commission with an affidavit stating the facts of authorship.

(c) An annual maximum of six (6) EP credits, earned at the rate of one hour of credit for every five billable hours of pro bono legal representation provided through court appointment, an

organized bar association program or an approved legal assistance organization, or of pro bono mediation services as required by Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 31 or the Federal Court Mediation Programs established by the United States District Courts in Tennessee, may be awarded. Credits awarded pursuant to this paragraph shall be exempt from the per-hour fee imposed by Section 8 of this Rule.

An “approved legal assistance organization” for the purposes of this section is an organization or professional association that (1) provides pro bono legal services and (2) is approved by this Court. An organization which receives funding from the Legal Services Corporation is presumptively approved under this section. Organizations or groups which do not provide legal assistance as their primary service or business but wish to develop an initiative or project designed specifically to provide pro bono legal services may apply to be approved by this Court under this section. Any organization seeking approval under this section must file a petition with the clerk of this Court. The Application for Tennessee Supreme Court Approval of Legal Assistance Organization form can be found on the CLE website - [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

(d) An attorney who provides indigent defense representation at a reduced hourly rate may receive EP credit for the uncompensated portion of the representation based upon the Commission’s formula as set out in the Request for Earned Indigent Defense Credit form. A maximum of six (6) hours of credit may be earned in any compliance year. Indigent Defense credit hours earned in a compliance year in excess of the six (6) credit annual maximum may be carried forward for credit in the succeeding compliance year, but only for the succeeding compliance year and only up to six (6) credit hours. The form Request for Earned Indigent Defense Credit can be found on the CLE website – [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com)

(e) An attorney may receive a combined maximum of six (6) credits of pro bono and/or indigent defense credit in any compliance year.

(f) One (1) year of CLE credit may be awarded for completion of a bar review course. An attorney shall not receive bar review credit and bar exam credit in the same compliance year. Bar review course credits earned via an approved Distance Learning format are subject to the eight (8) hour per year limitation. Online bar review courses that do not satisfy the Distance Learning format criteria will not be approved for CLE credit.

## **Section 5. Continuing Legal Education Providers.**

**5.01.** The following standards will govern the approval by the Commission of continuing legal education activities:

(a) The activity must have significant intellectual or practical content and its primary objective must be to enhance the participant's professional competence as an attorney.

(b) The activity must deal primarily with matters related to substantive law, the practice of law, professional responsibility, or ethical obligations of attorneys.

(c) The activity must be offered by a provider having substantial recent experience in offering



continuing legal education or demonstrated ability to organize and effectively present continuing legal education. Demonstrated ability arises partly from the extent to which individuals with legal training or educational experience are involved in the planning, instruction, and supervision of the activity.

(d) The activity itself must be conducted by an individual or group qualified by practical or academic legal experience. The program, including the named advertised instructors, must be conducted substantially as planned, subject to emergency withdrawals and alterations.

(e) Textual materials should be made available in written or electronic form to all participants at or before the time the course is presented, unless the absence of such materials is recognized as reasonable.

(f) The activity must be conducted in a format approved by the Commission including, but not limited to, online and web based programs. All courses are accredited for one year from the date of creation and may be renewed for one additional year if the course content is current.

(g) Twelve (12) activities are eligible for Live CLE credit. See Section 3.01 for requirement. The twelve (12) activities are:

1. Traditional in-classroom courses. A maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See Section 3.01(c) of this Rule;

2. Teaching at an approved CLE activity. A maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.03(a) of this Rule (includes video re-play with a qualified commentator); 3. Teaching at an approved educational institution. A maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits (law schools only) may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.03(b) of this Rule;

4. Pro Bono representation. A maximum of six (6) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.08(c) of this Rule;

5. Indigent Defense representation (uncompensated portion only). A maximum of six (6) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.08(d) of this Rule;

6. Published Writing. A maximum of six (6) General and one and one-half (1.5) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.08(b) of this Rule;

7. Formal enrollment and education of a postgraduate nature for credit or audit at an approved educational institution. Credit is earned hour for hour. See section 4.04 of this Rule. For Live courses, a maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. For online courses, via an approved Distance Learning format, there is a maximum of eight (8) hours of credit each compliance year. See section 3.01(c) of this Rule;

8. Service as a Bar Examiner. A maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.05 of this Rule;

9. Service on the Board of Professional Responsibility or one of its hearing committees. Credit is limited to three (3) EP credits in any compliance year. See section 4.07 of this Rule;

10. Participation as a member of governmental commissions, committees, or other governmental bodies involved in formal sessions for review of proposed legislation, rules or regulations pertaining to the judicial branch of government, including its proceedings, administration and rules on practice and procedure. A maximum of six (6) General and one and

one-half (1.5) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.08(a) of this Rule;

11. Completion of Bar Review course. For Live courses, a maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. See section 4.06 of this Rule. For online courses, via an approved Distance Learning format, there is a maximum of eight (8) hours of credit each compliance year. See section 3.01(c) of this Rule; and

12. Successful completion of a bar examination, specialist certification program, and/or examination for admission to practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office. A maximum of twelve (12) General credits and three (3) EP credits may be applied to any compliance year. Bar review course credit and bar exam credit cannot both be claimed in the same compliance year. See section 4.08(f).

(h) Two (2) categories of activities are eligible for Distance Learning CLE credit. See Section 3.01 for requirement. Those two (2) categories are:

1. “real time” or “streamed” seminars whether through “conference call” or viewed through a computer or portable video device via the internet (“webcast”), and

2. Online, computer-based audio/video presentations, whether pre-recorded or not, that provide some form of interactive component and a completion certification from the sponsor.

(i) No activity consisting solely of the viewing or hearing of pre-recorded material will be awarded credit. The following types of courses and online formats are not eligible for CLE credit: YouTube videos, self-study courses, pre-recorded courses without interactivity, courses delivered as on-demand without interactivity, and courses delivered through an electronic device without interactivity.

(j) Activities that cross academic lines, such as accounting-tax seminars, may be considered for approval.

**5.02.** Tennessee does not recognize presumptive approval status for providers.

**5.03.** Tennessee does not recognize presumptive approval for any activity or program.

**5.04.** The Commission may at any time re-evaluate a program and revoke specific approval of any particular seminar.

**5.05.** (a) Any provider desiring to advertise Commission approval of a course, program, or other activity, shall submit an application for such permission and supporting documentation electronically or on the Uniform Application for Accreditation at least forty-five (45) days prior to the date on which the course or program is scheduled. Documentation shall include a statement of the provider’s intention to comply with the accreditation standards of this Rule, copies of programs and written materials distributed to participants at the two most recently produced programs, if available, or an outline of the proposed program and list of instructors if the provider has not produced previous programs, and such further information as the Commission shall request. The staff of the Commission will advise the provider whether the activity is approved or disapproved in writing by mail or by electronic means within thirty (30)

days of the receipt of the completed application.

(b) Providers denied approval of a program or activity may appeal such a decision by submitting a letter of appeal to the Executive Director within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of the notice of disapproval. Within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the appeal, the Executive Director shall make a new decision which shall be promptly delivered to the provider. Any adverse decision may be appealed to the full Commission for final decision.

(c) Any provider may submit to the Commission the Uniform Application for Accreditation seeking approval of a program after the program is conducted. The form is available on the Becoming a Provider page on the Commission's website - [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

(d) An attorney licensed to practice in Tennessee who has attended an out-of-state CLE activity not approved in advance by the Commission shall submit a detailed agenda and speaker biographies for the purpose of obtaining accreditation of the course after the program is conducted. All rules pertaining to course accreditation shall apply.

**5.06.** (a) The provider of a continuing legal education activity approved in advance may advertise or indicate approval of an activity, as follows: "This course has been approved by the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education for a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ hours of credit."

(b) Any out-of-state provider that holds a program in Tennessee and does not obtain program accreditation shall include a statement on any program advertisement:

- (1) "This program is not accredited in Tennessee"; or
- (2) "We intend to seek accreditation for this program in Tennessee"; or
- (3) "This program is not being submitted for accreditation in Tennessee".

**5.07.** Attendance at continuing legal education courses shall be reported within 30 days of the completion of the course.

## **Section 6. Annual Report.**

**6.01.** On or before February 28 of each year, the Commission shall prepare and provide an Annual Report Statement to each attorney covered by this Rule requesting information concerning the attorney's compliance with Section 3.01 of this Rule in the preceding calendar year. The Annual Report Statement may be provided 1) by a form of United States mail providing delivery confirmation, 2) through the Commission's website or 3) be mailed to the attorney's address as shown in the most recent registration statement filed by the attorney pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 10.1, or to the attorney's last known address as shown in the MCLE database. Service of the Annual Report Statement and any other notices required or provided for by this Rule upon any attorney may also be made by electronic means. All attorneys shall maintain a current e-mail address and provide updated information upon

request from the Commission. Failure to receive the Annual Report sent to the attorney does not alleviate the attorney's obligation to satisfy the requirements set forth in this Rule, including the requirements of section 6.02.

**6.02.** On or before March 31st, each attorney shall complete the Annual Report Statement, indicating his or her completion of, exemption from, or approved substitute for accredited continuing legal education during the preceding calendar year, and shall deliver the completed Annual Report Statement to the Commission. The completed Annual Report Statement shall disclose all CLE hours earned during the preceding calendar year, including any hours to be carried forward to the following year. Any attorney whose Annual Report Statement demonstrates compliance with Section 3.01 of this Rule, and whose Annual Report Statement demonstrates that all fees due the Commission for the preceding calendar year have been paid, shall be exempt from the requirement to sign and deliver to the Commission the Annual Report Statement described herein.

Any attorney who fails to meet the March 31st deadline who has not previously been assessed the one hundred dollar (\$100.00) fee for the applicable compliance year shall be assessed the one hundred dollar (\$100.00) fee on April 1st. The one hundred dollar (\$100.00) fee shall be due and payable on April 1st.

**6.03.** The Annual Report Statement shall reflect any unpaid course reporting fees and any non-compliance fee assessed pursuant to Section 7.03 along with a schedule of additional penalties which will result from continued non-compliance.

**6.04.** The files and records of the Commission are deemed confidential and shall not be disclosed except in furtherance of the duties of the Commission; statistical abstracts may, however, be drawn therefrom in an anonymous fashion. [As amended by order filed December 16, 2014, effective January 1, 2016, Section 6 replaced in its entirety.]

## **Section 7. Non-compliance and Sanctions**

**7.01.** By April 30 of each year, the Commission shall compile:

- (a) A list of those attorneys who did not timely file an Annual Report Statement for the preceding calendar year, including attorneys who failed to timely claim an exemption.
- (b) A list of those attorneys who have not complied with the requirements of Section 3.01 of this Rule for the preceding calendar year; and
- (c) A list of those attorneys who have not paid all fees due under Section 8.03 of this Rule.

**7.02.** By April 30 of each year, the Commission shall serve each attorney listed on any of the three foregoing lists a Notice of Non-compliance requiring the attorney to remedy his/her deficiencies on or before May 31 of that year. The notice shall be served upon the attorney by electronic mail or a form of United States mail providing delivery confirmation to either the



address shown in the most recent registration statement filed by the attorney pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 10.1 or the attorney's last known address as shown in the MCLE database.

Failure to receive the Notice of Non-compliance, sent to the attorney's last known address, does not alleviate the attorney's obligation to satisfy the requirements set forth in this Rule, including the requirements of section 7.04.

**7.03.** Each attorney who is subject to the Tennessee CLE requirements who does not satisfy the full number of required hours by December 31 of the previous compliance year shall be assessed an Initial Non-compliance Fee of One Hundred Dollars (\$100) on January 1 immediately following the end of the compliance year. Any Initial Non-compliance Fee shall be paid on or before March 31 of that year. If any attorney shows to the satisfaction of the Executive Director of the Commission that the Notice of Non-compliance was erroneously issued, the Initial Non-compliance Fee shall not be due.

**7.04.** Each attorney to whom a Notice of Non-compliance is issued on April 30, who was not previously assessed the \$100 non-compliance fee on January 1st, shall pay to the Commission a non-compliance fee of One Hundred Dollars (\$100). Said fee shall be assessed on the Notice of Non-compliance. In order to establish compliance, attorneys shall file a valid statement of exemption or an Affidavit of Compliance with the Commission on or before May 31 of that year showing that he or she has remedied his/her deficiencies. In addition, any attorney who receives a Notice of Non-compliance showing a fee due to the Commission shall pay the full amount of the fee by May 31st as part of establishing his/her compliance. If by the May 31 deadline, an attorney fails to claim an exemption, remedy his/her deficiencies, pay any fee owing to the Commission or timely file an Affidavit of Compliance, the attorney shall pay to the Commission an additional Continuing Non-compliance Fee of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200). The Two Hundred Dollar Continuing Non-compliance Fee shall be due and payable on June 1st.

**7.05.** On or before July 1 of each year, the Commission shall prepare a draft Suspension Order listing all attorneys who were issued Notices of Non-compliance and who failed to remedy their deficiencies by May 31. The Commission shall submit the draft Suspension Order to the Supreme Court for informational purposes. The Commission also shall provide a copy of the draft Suspension Order to each attorney named in the draft Suspension Order by electronic mail or a form of United States mail providing delivery confirmation, to either the address shown in the most recent registration statement filed by the attorney pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 10.1 or to the attorney's last known address as shown in the MCLE database. Failure to receive a copy of the draft Suspension Order, sent to the attorney's last known address, does not alleviate the attorney's obligation to satisfy the requirements set forth in this Rule.

**7.06.** On or before August 10 of each year, each attorney listed in the draft Suspension Order shall file an Affidavit of Compliance in a form acceptable to the Commission showing compliance with Section 3 of this Rule for the preceding calendar year or a valid statement of exemption. Upon the Commission's approval of the Affidavit of Compliance or a valid statement of exemption and upon the attorney's payment of all outstanding fees, the Commission shall remove the attorney's name from the list of potential suspensions contained in the draft

## Suspension Order.

**7.07.** On August 15 of each year, the Commission shall submit to the Supreme Court a final Suspension Order listing all attorneys with active Tennessee law licenses who failed to comply with this Rule for the preceding calendar year. Also by August 15, the Commission shall notify the Board of Professional Responsibility of the names of all licensed attorneys who have retired, taken inactive status, been suspended, or whose license to practice law in this state is otherwise inactive, and who failed to comply with the requirements of this Rule. The Supreme Court will review the final Suspension Order and, upon the Court's approval, shall enter the Suspension Order suspending the law license of each attorney listed in the order. The Board of Professional Responsibility shall not reactivate the license of any attorney whose license is suspended pursuant to this Rule until the Commission certifies completion of a program of remedial continuing legal education satisfactory to the Commission.

**7.08.** Each attorney named in the final Suspension Order entered by the Court or whose name is submitted to the Board of Professional Responsibility as ineligible for reactivation for failure to meet the requirements of this Rule shall pay to the Commission a Five Hundred Dollar (\$500) Suspension Fee as a condition of reinstatement of his or her law license. The Suspension Fee shall be paid in addition to the Initial Non-compliance Fee (\$100) and in addition to the Continuing Non-compliance Fee (\$200).

**7.09.** Payment of all fees imposed in this section shall be a requirement for compliance with this Rule.

**7.10.** An attorney suspended or made ineligible for reactivation by the Commission pursuant to this Rule may file with the Commission an application for reinstatement demonstrating compliance with Section 3.01 of this Rule. If the application is satisfactory to the Commission, if the attorney is otherwise eligible for reinstatement, and if the attorney has paid in full all fees due under this Rule, the Commission will recommend to the Supreme Court that the Court reinstate the attorney's law license.

**7.11.** An attorney may address the Commission, by telephone during the Commission's scheduled monthly meeting, in regard to a recommendation of suspension or a recommendation against reinstatement. Additionally, any attorney not finding suitable relief before the Commission may petition the Supreme Court for modification or reversal of actions of the Commission. [Added by order filed March 21, 2002.]

**7.12.** No attorney suspended under this Rule 21 may resume practice until reinstated by Order of the Supreme Court. [As amended by order filed December 16, 2014, effective January 1, 2016, Section 7 replaced in its entirety.]

## **Section 8. Financing.**

**8.01.** The Commission shall be adequately funded to enable it to perform its duties in a financially independent and responsible manner.

**8.02.** (a) Providers of CLE programs held within the State of Tennessee, as a condition of accreditation shall remit to the Commission an alphabetical list of attendees and to pay a fee of \$2.00 per approved credit hour for paper filings and a fee of \$1.00 per approved credit hour for electronic filings for each attorney licensed in Tennessee who attends the program. This provider's fee, along with the list of attendees, shall be submitted within thirty (30) days after the program is held.

Providers submitting attendance for any course, whether held within the state or outside of the state, more than forty-five (45) days after completion of the course shall pay as a late fee one additional dollar per credit hour per attorney. All attendance shall be reported within one year of the date of the completion of the course. Attendance submitted more than one year after the date of completion of the course will not be posted.

(b) Course attendance fees are due and shall be paid at the time the course attendance is reported. If the provider does not have a credit balance sufficient to cover the reported attendance, payment will be required. Unpaid attendance will not post to attorney records.

(c) Information contained in the attendance report required by this section or any Commission requirement under this Rule or obtained by the Commission through analysis or comparison of such reports or information shall be deemed confidential.

**8.03.** Attorneys attending approved out-of-state CLE programs, or other programs for which the sponsor does not report and pay the per-hour fee, shall be responsible for remitting their individual fees at the rates set under § 8.02. This fee shall be paid at the time of, and along with, the report of such hours. All attendance shall be reported within one year of the date of completion of the course. Attendance submitted more than one year after the date of completion of the course will not be posted.

**8.04.** The Commission will review the level of the fees at least annually and adjust the levels as necessary to maintain adequate finances for prudent operation of the Commission.

**8.05.** The Commission shall deposit all funds collected hereunder with the State Treasurer; all such funds including earnings on investments and all interest and proceeds from said funds, if any, are deemed to be, and shall be designated as, funds belonging solely to the Commission. Withdrawals from those funds shall only be made by the Commission for the purposes set forth in this Rule, and for such other purposes as this Court may from time to time authorize or direct.

#### **Section 9. Effective Dates of the Rule.**

**9.01.** The establishment of the program for Mandatory Continuing Legal Education for attorneys licensed in Tennessee took effect on January 1, 1987. This Rule shall continue until such time as the Supreme Court shall determine that its program is no longer in keeping with the Court's



responsibility to the legal profession in Tennessee and the public which it serves.

**Section 10. Annual CLE Compliance Summary.**

**10.01.** Notwithstanding any other provision of this Rule to the contrary, the Commission shall publish an Annual CLE Compliance Summary of the activities of the Commission and the CLE reports and requests for exemption received by the Commission during the preceding compliance year. As part of this summary, the Commission shall report on the following topics:

- (a) The number of courses approved and rejected for accreditation;
- (b) The number of providers from whom lawyers holding a Tennessee license have received CLE credit;
- (c) The number of General and EP credit hours earned by lawyers holding a Tennessee license, both in the aggregate and in the following general categories:
  - (1) Live credit programs;
  - (2) Distance learning credit programs broken down by the following categories:
    - (i) online computer interactive;
    - (ii) webinars; and
    - (iii) telephone conference calls;
  - (3) pro bono legal representation;
  - (4) teaching;
  - (5) completion of a law-related course broken down by the following areas:
    - (i) bar review course;
    - (ii) bar exam; and
    - (iii) postgraduate course;
  - (6) service to the bar in the following areas:
    - (i) bar examiner;
    - (ii) governmental commissions, committees, or other governmental bodies; and
    - (iii) Board of Professional Responsibility or as a hearing committee member; and

(7) published author;

(d) The number of courses offered per provider and the attendance figures based on the categories above;

(e) The number of lawyers holding a Tennessee license who have been granted an exemption for the previous compliance year; and

(f) The number of requests for exceptional relief granted by the Commission during the previous compliance year.

The Commission shall also report generally on the substantive content areas in which CLE credits are being earned and reported. The Commission's report relating to the preceding compliance year shall be published on its website by October 31st.

### **Section 11. Identification of Specialists.**

**11.01.** Lawyers licensed to practice law in Tennessee may be certified as being a legal specialist by any organization that has been accredited by the American Bar Association's House of Delegates to award specialist certifications to lawyers.

**11.02.** Each lawyer who has received a certification as a specialist shall register the certification with the Commission. The Commission shall confirm that the certification presented by the specialist has been issued from an organization that has been accredited by the American Bar Association's House of Delegates to award specialist certifications to lawyers. However, the Commission shall have no authority to certify any lawyer practicing in this State as being a specialist in any area of law.

**11.03.** Upon confirmation that a lawyer has received a specialist certification from an appropriate certifying organization, the Commission shall record the following information in the form of a Roll of Certified Specialists:

(a) the lawyer's name;

(b) the lawyer's Board of Professional Responsibility registration number;

(c) the state and county in which the lawyer maintains the lawyer's principal office;

(d) the name, address, and a link to the current website of the certifying organization;

(e) the area or areas of law in which the lawyer has obtained a specialty certification; and

(f) the date on which the lawyer obtained the specialty certification.

**11.04.** Each lawyer shall renew the lawyer's registration annually with the Commission and, in

so doing, shall represent that the specialty certification remains valid. If a lawyer's certification of specialty has expired, or is withdrawn or revoked for any reason, the lawyer must report such fact to the Commission within fifteen (15) days of the expiration, withdrawal, or revocation. If a lawyer fails to renew the specialty certification, or if the lawyer notifies the Commission of the expiration, withdrawal or revocation of a specialty certification, the Commission shall immediately remove the lawyer's information from the Roll of Certified Specialists.

**11.05.** No lawyer shall at any time represent that the lawyer is a specialist in any area of law without first having a current registration of a valid certification on file with the Commission.

**11.06.** The Commission shall maintain the Roll of Certified Specialists, taking special care to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of information contained therein. The Commission shall also make the Roll of Certified Specialists available for public inspection and shall publish the Roll from time to time. The Commission may satisfy the obligation to publish the Roll of Certified Specialists by maintaining the Roll on the Commission's website - [www.cletn.com](http://www.cletn.com).

**11.07.** The Commission, subject to the approval of the Court, may establish and collect reasonable fees from lawyers seeking to register, or re-register, any specialty certification to offset the costs of administering the procedures set forth in this Section

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