



## **Supreme Court of Illinois Amends MCLE Rules** **Offering Even More Options to Attorneys to Satisfy MCLE Requirement**

The Supreme Court of Illinois has amended its minimum continuing legal education rules ([MCLE Rules](#)) and the MCLE Board's fee schedule effective September 27, 2011. With those changes, the Court has given attorneys even more options to complete their MCLE requirements. These options include participating in non-traditional activities without the \$20.00 fee, carrying over excess professional responsibility credit as professional responsibility hours and satisfying a portion of the requirement for newly-admitted attorney by participating in a mentoring program approved by the Commission on Professionalism.

The amended [MCLE Rules](#) are available on the Illinois Supreme Court website and the MCLE Board is updating its website to reflect these changes. A brief overview of some changes of interest to attorneys:

- Eliminates \$20.00 fee beginning with the next two-year reporting period that ends June 30, 2012;
- Expands the carryover credit of 10 hours per reporting period to include excess professional responsibility credits carried over as professional responsibility credit;
- Gives newly-admitted attorneys more options to satisfy their MCLE requirements. Instead of taking one 15-hour course, newly-admitted attorneys admitted on or after October 1, 2011 will need to earn 15 hours from these options: a six-hour Basic Skills Course; a mentoring program approved by the Commission on Professionalism; and up to nine accredited hours of the attorney's choosing. Newly-admitted attorneys admitted before September 30, 2011 will have the option of taking either the 15-hour course or earning 15 hours from these options: a six-hour Basic Skills Course; a mentoring program approved by the Commission on Professionalism; and up to nine accredited hours of the attorney's choosing;
- Formalizes the appeal process for denial of course accreditation and denial of exemption and extension requests to reflect the process already used by the MCLE Board;
- Changes some mailing procedures. For example, the Board will not mail notices to attorneys who have been removed from the master roll due to MCLE non-compliance in at least two consecutive reporting periods but online reporting will continue to be available for those non-exempt attorneys who are responsible for completing required credits;
- Allows newly-admitted attorneys admitted on or after July 1, 2009 to earn more carryover credit earlier. Newly-admitted attorneys admitted on or after July 1, 2009 may begin earning carryover credits upon admission to the Illinois bar and may carry over up to 15 hours (up from the current 10 hours) to the first two-year reporting period; and
- Changes the requirements for attorneys with prior practice before admission to the Illinois bar on or after October 1, 2011. Under the previous Rules, attorneys who had practiced for at least one year at any time during their careers were able to claim an exemption based on that prior practice. Now, if the attorney had at least one year of practice in the previous three years, the attorney needs to complete at least 15 hours of MCLE credit in that first year. If any portion of the attorney's prior practice occurred more than three years before the attorney's admission to the Illinois bar, the attorney does not have an exemption and needs to complete the requirements for newly-admitted attorneys then report.