



*State of New York
Court of Appeals*

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June 30, 2014

NOTICE TO THE BAR

Pro Bono Scholars Program

The Court of Appeals has amended the Rules for the Admission of Attorneys and Counselors at Law by adding section 520.17 to provide for the Pro Bono Scholars Program (PBSP). The PBSP, first announced by Chief Judge Lippman in his 2014 State of the Judiciary Address, is a program of legal education administered by the New York State Court system in consultation with approved law schools in the United States that allows students in their final year of law study to devote their last semester to performing pro bono service for the poor through an approved externship program, law school clinic, legal services provider, law firm, or corporation. Students who enroll in the program will spend 12 weeks working full time in a pro bono placement, while concomitantly completing an academic component at their law school. For their work in the pro bono placement and the accompanying academic instruction, students will receive academic credit from their law school. As an added benefit to participating in the program, students will be permitted to take the New York bar examination during their final semester of study.

The first of its kind in the country, the PBSP is devoted to preparing students for the practice of law, impressing upon them the value of public service, and providing legal assistance to individuals of limited means.

A copy of the order amending the Rules is attached. For more information on the PBSP, please see the Program's website at: www.nycourts.gov/probonoscholars

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**State of New York
Court of Appeals**

At a session of the Court, held at Court of Appeals Hall in the City of Albany on the 24th day of June, 2014

Present, HON. JONATHAN LIPPMAN, Chief Judge, presiding.

In the Matter

of

The Amendment of the Rules of the Court of Appeals for the Admission of Attorneys and Counselors at Law.

Pursuant to section 53 of the Judiciary Law, it is hereby

ORDERED that Part 520 of the Rules of the Court of Appeals for the Admission of Attorneys and Counselors at Law (22 NYCRR § 520) is amended, effective July 16, 2014, or as soon thereafter as section 52 of the Judiciary Law is complied with, by deleting the following bracketed material from and adding the underlined material to subsection 520.3(a) thereof and by adding section 520.17.

§ 520.3 Study of Law in Law School

(a) General. An applicant may qualify to take the New York State bar examination by submitting to the New York State Board of Law Examiners satisfactory proof that:

(1) the applicant attended and was graduated with a first degree in law from an approved

law school; [or]

(2) the applicant attended and successfully completed the prescribed course of instruction required for a first degree in law at an approved law school, but has not been awarded the degree as of the date proof of eligibility to sit for the bar examination is required to be filed with the State Board of Law Examiners. The State Board of Law Examiners shall not certify the applicant for admission to the bar pursuant to section 520.7(a) of this Part until the applicant has presented satisfactory proof that the applicant has been awarded a first degree in law[.]; or

(3) the applicant satisfies the requirements of section 520.17 of this Part.

§ 520.17 Pro Bono Scholars Program

(a) General. The Pro Bono Scholars Program is a voluntary component of legal education that provides law student participants in their final semester of study with an opportunity to assist in improving access to justice for persons of limited means while acquiring practical legal skills training. The program is administered by the Chief Administrator of the Courts or a designee and provided through approved law schools in the United States.

(b) Eligibility. A student may participate in the Pro Bono Scholars Program upon proof that:

(1) the student is enrolled in the final semester of law school study in a first degree in law program at an approved law school in the United States, as that term is defined in section 520.3 of this Part, and satisfies any eligibility requirements set by the student's law

school; and

(2) upon successful completion of the Pro Bono Scholars Program the student will have satisfied:

(i) the instructional and academic calendar requirements of section 520.3(c) and (d) of this Part; and

(ii) the necessary requirements for graduation at the student's law school, and will be awarded a first degree in law.

(c) Program requirements. A student enrolled in the Pro Bono Scholars Program must complete:

(1) the New York State bar examination administered during the final semester of the student's law school study;

(2) at least 12 weeks of full-time pro bono work at a placement approved by the student's law school and the Chief Administrator or a designee, where such work will be supervised by an attorney admitted to practice in the jurisdiction where the work is performed and by a faculty member of the student's law school; and

(3) a concomitant academic component at an approved law school in the United States, and any other academic requirements set by the student's law school.

(d) Law school credit. A student who completes the Pro Bono Scholars Program must receive at least 12 academic credits for participation in the program.

(e) Pro bono service defined. For purposes of this section, pro bono service is full-time

supervised law-related work that assists in the provision of legal services for:

(1) persons who are financially unable to pay for legal representation;

(2) not-for-profit legal service providers that predominantly address the legal needs of indigent clients where the work performed is for such clients; or

(3) governmental entities, so long as the work performed is on behalf of identifiable individuals who are financially unable to afford representation or whose unmet legal needs prevent their access to justice.

(f) Bar examination and accelerated admission to the bar. A student who participates in the Pro Bono Scholars Program must complete the New York State bar examination during the student's final semester of law study, provided the student's law school submits certification to the New York State Board of Law Examiners that the student, upon successful completion of the Pro Bono Scholars Program, will meet the requirements of section 520.3(c) and (d) of this Part and will be awarded a first degree in law. The State Board of Law Examiners shall not certify the student for admission to the bar pursuant to section 520.7(a) of this Part until the student has presented proof that the student has successfully completed the Pro Bono Scholars Program and has been awarded a first degree in law.

(g) Noncompliance. A student enrolled in the Pro Bono Scholars Program must complete all program requirements by the date established by the Chief Administrator or a designee and by the student's law school. The deadline for program compliance may be extended

only in exceptional circumstances and upon a written request by the student's law school, submitted to the Chief Administrator or a designee, setting forth the specific reasons for the student's inability to timely complete the program. The determination whether to extend the deadline is within the discretion of the Chief Administrator or a designee. Absent a showing of exceptional circumstances, the failure to complete the program requirements by the deadline will result in the student's bar examination results being voided.

(h) Delegation of authority. The administrative power for the implementation and oversight of the Pro Bono Scholars Program, including, without limitation, the power to set forth requirements for the program's operation not inconsistent with any provision of this section, is vested in the Chief Judge or the Chief Administrator.