

**American Bar Association  
Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar  
Standards Review Committee**

**CHAPTER 5:  
ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES**

**Clean Draft for November 2010**

Redline to draft of July 2010

**Standard 501. ADMISSIONS**

**(a) A law school shall maintain sound admission policies and practices, consistent with its mission and the objectives of its educational program.**

**(b) A law school shall not admit applicants who do not appear capable of satisfactorily completing its educational program and being admitted to the bar.**

**(c) A law school shall not admit or readmit a student who has been disqualified previously for academic reasons without an affirmative showing that the student possesses the requisite ability and that the prior disqualification does not indicate a lack of capacity to complete the course of study at the admitting school. For every admission or readmission of a previously disqualified individual, a statement of the considerations that led to the decision shall be placed in the admittee's file.**

**Interpretation 501-1**

Sound admissions policies and practices may include consideration of admission test scores, undergraduate course of study and grade point average, extracurricular activities, work experience, performance in other graduate or professional programs, performance in a law school pre-admission program, relevant demonstrated skills, and obstacles overcome.

**Interpretation 501-2**

A law school's admission policies shall be consistent with Standards 211 and 212.

**Interpretation 501-3**

Among the factors to consider in assessing compliance with Standard 501(b) are the academic and admission test credentials of the law school's entering students, the academic attrition rate of the law school's students, the bar passage rate of its graduates, and the effectiveness of the law school's academic support program. Successful bar passage alone does not demonstrate compliance with Standard 501(b).

**Standard 502. EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

**(a) Except as set forth in Standard Subsections 502(b) and (c), a law school shall require a bachelor's degree for admission to its J.D. degree program. For graduates of U.S. schools,**

the degree must have been awarded by an institution that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. For graduates of schools outside of the U.S., the law school shall assure that the quality of the educational program is equivalent to that of schools accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

(b) A law school may admit applicants who have completed three-fourths of the work leading to a bachelor's degree as part of a bachelor's degree/J.D. program if the undergraduate institution is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the Department of Education.

(c) Under special circumstances, a law school may admit to its J.D. degree program an applicant who does not possess the ~~educational~~ requirements of subsections (a) or (b) if the applicant's experience, ability, and other qualifications ~~characteristics~~ clearly show an aptitude for the study of law. The admitting officer shall sign and place in the admittee's file a statement of the considerations that led to the decision to admit the applicant.

#### **Interpretation 502-1**

Within a reasonable time after an admitted student registers, a law school should have on file the student's official transcript verifying all academic work undertaken and degrees conferred. "Official transcript" means a transcript certified by the issuing school to the admitting school or delivered to the admitting school in a sealed envelope with seal intact.

~~alternative one:~~

#### **Standard 503. ADMISSION TEST**

~~A law school shall require each applicant for admission as a first year J.D. student to take a valid and reliable admission test. In making admissions decisions, a law school shall use the test results in a manner that is consistent with the guidelines regarding proper use of the test results provided by the agency that developed the test.~~

#### **Interpretation 503-1**

~~This Standard does not prescribe the particular weight that a law school should give to an applicant's admission test score in deciding whether to admit or deny admission to the applicant.~~

#### **Standard 504. CHARACTER AND FITNESS**

A law school shall advise all applicants at the time they apply that there are character, fitness and other qualifications for admission to the bar and encourage them to determine what those requirements are in the state(s) in which they intend to practice. The law school shall, as soon after matriculation as is practicable, take additional steps to apprise entering students of the importance of determining the applicable character, fitness and other qualifications.

#### **Interpretation 504-1**

If a law school considers an applicant's character, fitness or other qualifications, it should exercise care that the consideration is not used as a reason to deny admission to a qualified applicant because of political, social, or economic views that might be considered unorthodox.

#### **Standard 506. ADMISSION OF APPLICANTS WITH ADVANCED STANDING, INCLUDING TRANSFERS**

(a) A law school may admit a student with advanced standing and ~~allow~~ grant credit for studies in:

(1) a law school approved by the American Bar Association;

(2) a law school in the United States that is not approved by the American Bar Association (a non-ABA approved law school) if the law school has been granted the power to confer the J.D. degree by the appropriate governmental authority in the unapproved law school's jurisdiction, provided the studies were "in residence" as defined in Standard 304, or qualify for credit under Standard 305 or Standard 306, and if the quality of the law school and content of the studies are such that credit would have been granted toward satisfaction of degree requirements if earned at the admitting school; or

(3) a law school outside the United States if the studies were "in residence" as defined in Standard 304, or qualify for credit under Standard 305 or 306, and if the quality of the law school and content of the studies are such that credit would have been granted towards satisfaction of degree requirements if earned at the admitting school.

(b) Advanced standing and credit hours granted for study at a non-ABA approved law school or for study at a law school outside the United States may not exceed one-third of the total required by an admitting school for its J.D. degree.

#### **Standard 508. ENROLLMENT OF NON-DEGREE CANDIDATES**

Without requiring compliance with its admission standards and procedures, a law school ~~shall~~ may enroll individuals in a particular course or limited number of courses, as auditors, non-degree candidates, or candidates for a degree other than a law degree, only if such enrollment does not detract from the law school's ability to maintain a J.D. program that meets the requirements of the Standards.

#### **Standard 509. BASIC CONSUMER INFORMATION**

A law school shall publish basic consumer information. The information shall be published in a fair and accurate manner reflective of actual practice.

**[Standard 509 and interpretations to be reviewed by another subcommittee**

**Interpretation 509-1**

The following categories of consumer information are considered basic:

- (1) admission data including admission of students who transfer into the law school;
- (2) tuition, fees, living costs, financial aid, and refund policy;
- (3) enrollment data and graduation rates;
- (4) composition and number of faculty and administrators;
- (5) curricular offerings;
- (6) library resources;
- (7) physical facilities; and
- (8) employment rates and bar passage data.]

**Standard 510. STUDENT LOAN PROGRAMS**

**A law school shall ~~take~~ demonstrate reasonable steps to minimize student loan defaults, including provision of debt counseling at the inception of a student's loan obligations and prior to graduation.**

**Interpretation 510-1**

The student loan default rates of a law school's graduates, including any results of financial or compliance audits and reviews, ~~should be considered~~ are relevant in assessing the extent to which a law school complies with this Standard.

**Interpretation 510-2**

The law school's obligation is deemed satisfied if the university of which the law school is a part provides to law students the reasonable steps described in this Standard.

**Standard 511. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

**A law school shall provide all its students, regardless of enrollment or scheduling option, with basic student services, including maintenance of accurate student records, academic advising and counseling, financial aid counseling, and an active career counseling service to assist students in making sound career choices and obtaining employment. If a law school does not provide these types of student services directly, it shall demonstrate that its students have reasonable access to such services from the university of which it is a part or from other sources.**

**Standard 512. Notification of Established Policies**

**A law school shall establish and publish policies with respect to handling violations of the school's conduct code and for handling student complaints and grievances.**