CHAPTER 5

ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES

Standard 501. ADMISSIONS

(a) A law school shall maintain sound admission policies and practices, consistent with the objectives of its educational program and the resources available for implementing those objectives.

(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.

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, 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.

Interpretation 501-4
A law school may not permit financial considerations detrimentally to affect its admission and retention policies and their administration. A law school may face a conflict of interest whenever the exercise of sound judgment in the application of admission policies or academic standards and retention policies might reduce enrollment below the level necessary to support the program.

Standard 502. EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

(a) A law school shall require for admission to its J.D. degree program a bachelor's degree, or successful completion of three-fourths of the work acceptable for a bachelor's degree, from an institution that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the Department of Education.

(b) In an extraordinary case, a law school may admit to its J.D. degree program an applicant who does not possess the educational requirements of subsection (a) if the applicant's experience, ability, and other 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
Before an admitted student registers, or within a reasonable time thereafter, a law school shall have on file the student's official transcript showing receipt of a bachelor's degree, if any, and all academic work undertaken. "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. A copy supplied by the Law School Data Assembly Service is not an official transcript, even though it is adequate for preliminary determination of admission.

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 to assist the school and the applicant in assessing the applicant's capability of satisfactorily completing the school's educational program. In making admissions decisions, a law school shall use the test results in a manner that is consistent with the current guidelines regarding proper use of the test results provided by the agency that developed the test.

Interpretation 503-1
A law school that uses an admission test other than the Law School Admission Test sponsored by the Law School Admission Council shall establish that such other test is a valid and reliable test to assist the school in assessing an applicant's capability to satisfactorily complete the school's educational program.

Interpretation 503-2
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.

Interpretation 503-3
A pre-admission program of coursework taught by members of the law school's full-time faculty and culminating in an examination or examinations, offered to some or all applicants prior to a decision to admit to the J.D. program, also may be useful in assessing the capability of an applicant to satisfactorily complete the school's educational program, to be admitted to the bar, and to become a competent professional.

Interpretation 503-4
The "Cautionary Policies Concerning LSAT Scores and Related Services" published by the Law School Admission Council is an example of the testing agency guidelines referred to in Standard 503. [See Appendix 2]

Standard 504. CHARACTER AND FITNESS

(a) A law school shall advise each applicant that there are character, fitness and other qualifications for admission to the bar and encourage the applicant, prior to matriculation, to determine what those requirements are in the state(s) in which the applicant intends to practice. The law school should, 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.

(b) The law school may, to the extent it deems appropriate, adopt such tests, questionnaires, or required references as the proper admission authorities may find useful and relevant, in determining the character, fitness or other qualifications of the applicants to the law school.

(c) If a law school considers an applicant's character, fitness or other qualifications, it shall 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 505. PREVIOUSLY DISQUALIFIED APPLICANT

A law school may admit or readmit a student who has been disqualified previously for academic reasons upon 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. In the case of admission to a law school other than the disqualifying school, this showing shall be made either by a letter from the disqualifying school or, if two or more years have elapsed since that disqualification, by the nature of interim work, activity, or studies indicating a stronger potential for law study. 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 505-1
The two year period begins on the date of the original determination to disqualify the student for academic reasons.

Interpretation 505-2
A student who enrolled in a pre-admission program but was not granted admission is not a student who was disqualified for academic reasons under this Standard.

Standard 506. APPLICANTS FROM LAW SCHOOLS NOT APPROVED BY THE ABA

(a) A law school may admit a student with advanced standing and allow credit for studies at a law school in the United States that is not approved by the American Bar Association ("non-ABA approved law school") if:

> **(1) the non-ABA approved 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, or graduates of the non-ABA approved law school are permitted to sit for the bar examination in the jurisdiction in which the school is located;**
>
> **(2) the studies were "in residence" as provided in Standard 304(b), or qualify for credit under Standard 305 or Standard 306; and (3) the content of the studies was such that credit therefore would have been granted towards satisfaction of degree requirements at the admitting school.**

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

Standard 507. APPLICANTS FROM FOREIGN LAW SCHOOLS

(a) A law school may admit a student with advanced standing and allow credit for studies at a law school outside the United States if:

> **(1) the studies were "in residence" as provided in Standard 304, or qualify for credit under Standard 305;**
>
> **(2) the content of the studies was such that credit therefore would have been granted towards satisfaction of degree requirements at the admitting school; and**
>
> **(3) the admitting school is satisfied that the quality of the educational program at the foreign law school was at least equal to that required by an approved school.**

(b) Advanced standing and credit hours granted for foreign study may not exceed one-third of the total required by an admitting school for its J.D. degree.

Interpretation 507-1
This Standard applies only to graduates of foreign law schools or students enrolled in a first degree granting law program in a foreign educational institution.

Standard 508. ENROLLMENT OF NON-DEGREE CANDIDATES

Without requiring compliance with its admission standards and procedures, a law school 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, provided that such enrollment does not adversely affect the quality of the course or the law school program.

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.

Interpretation 509-1
The following categories of consumer information are considered basic:

(1) admission data;

(2) tuition, fees, living costs, financial aid, and refunds;

(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) placement rates and bar passage data.

Interpretation 509-2
To comply with its obligation to publish basic consumer information under the first sentence of this Standard, a law school may either provide the information to a publication designated by the Council or publish the information in its own publication. If the school chooses to meet this obligation through its own publication, the basic consumer information shall be published in a manner comparable to that used in the Council-designated publication, and the school shall provide the publication to all of its applicants.

Interpretation 509-3
In addition to the publication of information required by Interpretations 509-1 and 509-2, a law school shall publish its academic calendar in its own catalog or similar publication and on its website.

Interpretation 509-4
Standard 509 requires a law school fairly and accurately to report basic consumer information whenever and wherever that information is reported or published. A law school's participation in the Council-designated publication referred to in Interpretation 509-2 and its provision of fair and accurate information for that book does not excuse a school from the obligation to report fairly and accurately all basic consumer information published in other places or for other purposes.

Interpretation 509-5
All law schools shall have and make publicly available a student tuition and fee refund policy. This policy shall contain a complete statement of all student tuition and fees and a schedule for the refund of student tuition and fees.

Interpretation 509-6
If a law school elects to make a public disclosure of its status as a law school approved by the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association, it shall do so accurately and shall include the name, address and telephone number of the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association.

Interpretation 509-7
A law school that lists in its course offerings a significant number of courses that have not been offered during the past two academic years and that are not being offered in the current academic year is not in compliance with this Standard.

Standard 510. STUDENT LOAN PROGRAMS

A law school shall take 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, shall be considered in assessing the extent to which a law school complies with this Standard.

Interpretation 510-2
The law school's obligation shall be 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 must demonstrate that its students have reasonable access to such services from the university of which it is a part or from other sources.