

ELIGIBILITY TO SIT FOR THE LLP EXAM IN COLORADO

The Colorado LLP Exam is comprised of a family law exam and professional conduct (LLP ethics) exam administered the same testing day.

What Do I Need to File to Be Eligible to Sit for the LLP Exam?

All applicants for a license to practice law as an LLP in Colorado must submit an application on the form provided by the Office of LLP Admissions and pay the required application fee to the Office of LLP Admissions by the application deadline published for a specific exam administration. The application form and instructions will explain what documentation is needed to demonstrate eligibility.

Eligibility documentation not submitted with the application must be submitted prior to an exam administration so the office can determine an applicant's eligibility to sit for the Colorado LLP Exam. Eligibility has to be assessed for each exam administration in order for an applicant to be cleared to sit for that exam administration. This clearance does not carry to a future exam administration. If Applicants do not submit the required eligibility documentation prior to the exam administration, the Applicant will not be allowed to sit for the exam.

What Are the Options to Be Eligible to Sit for the LLP Exam?

The information below provides guidance to establish the eligibility for a person to sit for the LLP Exam. Additional requirements apply before an applicant can be cleared to take the Oath of Admission as an LLP in Colorado. Specifically, to start practicing law as an LLP, Applicants must prove that they have the character and fitness necessary to practice law in the State of Colorado (see C.R.C.P. 207.4(2), C.R.C.P. 208, and C.R.C.P. 209).

The Colorado Supreme Court approved two ways an individual can be eligible to take the LLP Exam: first, through a combination of education and work experience; and second, if educational criteria cannot be met, through additional work experience and employment. Accordingly, an applicant may be eligible to sit for the LLP Exam provided that such applicant meets all of the requirements of at least one of the following two eligibility categories:

“PATH A”: EDUCATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE

To be eligible to sit for the LLP Exam under “Path A:”

1. An applicant must meet one or more of the following educational degree categories:
 - a. Earned a J.D. from an ABA-accredited law school OR a state-accredited law school.
 - b. Earned an associate’s degree in paralegal studies from an accredited school.
 - c. Earned a bachelor’s degree in paralegal studies from an accredited school.
 - d. Earned a bachelor’s degree in any subject from an accredited school that includes:
 - i. a paralegal certificate, or
 - ii. 15 hours of paralegal studies from an accredited school.
 - e. Earned their first professional law degree from a law school in a country other than the United States AND an LL.M. degree that meets the curricular requirements of Rule 203.4(6) at an ABA-accredited U.S. law school.
2. An applicant under “Path A” also must demonstrate the following work experience, totaling at least 1,500 worked hours (not necessarily “billable hours”) that satisfy both of the following requirements:
 - a. Completion of at least 1,500 worked hours of substantive law-related practice experience within the three years (36 months) immediately preceding the date of application submission, **which must include the following:**
 - b. Completion of at least 500 worked hours of Colorado family law practice experience within the three years (36 months) immediately preceding the date of application submission.
3. An applicant under “Path A” also must have successfully completed an ethics class specific to LLPs or lawyers from an accredited school before sitting for the LLP Exam.

See C.R.C.P. 207.8(3), (5) and (7). More details about the documentation needed for demonstrating satisfaction with “Path A” requirements are set forth below.

“PATH B”: WORK EXPERIENCE AND EMPLOYMENT

To be eligible to sit for the LLP Exam under “Path B”:

1. In addition to demonstrating the same quantity of qualifying work experience as applicants under “Path A,” an applicant seeking eligibility under “Path B” must have worked the equivalent of three full-time years in employment constituting substantive law-related practice experience within the five years immediately preceding the date of application. Applying the definitions set forth below, this means that an applicant under “Path B” must demonstrate at least 4,500 hours worked in substantive law-related practice within the last 60 months **of which** at least 1,500 hours must be within the three years (36 months) immediately preceding the date of application submission.
2. An applicant under “Path B” also must demonstrate a certain quantity of family law work experience **within** the hours of substantive law-related practice experience. Specifically, the applicant must have worked the equivalent of one full-time year focused on Colorado family law within the five years (at least 1,500 worked hours within 60 months), **of which** at least 500 hours must be within the three years (36 months) immediately preceding the date of application.
3. An applicant under “Path B” also must have successfully completed an ethics class specific to LLPs or lawyers from an accredited school before sitting for the LLP Exam.

See C.R.C.P. 207.8(4), (5) and (7). More details about the documentation needed for demonstrating satisfaction with “Path B” requirements are set forth below.

How Will the Office of LLP Admissions Define Substantive Law-Related Practice Experience and Employment and Colorado Family Law Experience for Purposes of Determining Eligibility?

The Office of LLP Admissions will use standard definitions and concepts to evaluate the work experience and employment of LLP applicants, described in more detail below.

1. **Full-Time Employment:** Full-time is defined as at least 1,500 worked hours (not necessarily “billable hours”) within a 12-month period.

2. **Part-time Employment:** An applicant who has worked on a part-time basis for some duration can still be eligible to sit for the exam if their total hours worked within the 60-month period immediately preceding the date of application is at least 4,500 hours (the equivalent of full-time for three years) within the 60-month period immediately preceding the date of application submission.
3. **Definition of “Employment”:** Internships and externships that provide academic credit to the applicant do not count as employment for eligibility. If no course credit was granted for the work, then the time may count towards the eligibility requirement if it otherwise satisfies the guidance herein. The work experience must have been on behalf of others or litigants in a domestic relations case who are not the applicant. In other words, applicants’ time spent on their own personal legal matters, including domestic relations matters, will not count.
4. **“Substantive Law-Related Practical Experience”:**
 - a. **Definition.** Substantive Law-Related Practical Experience means the supervised provision of legal or law-related services to individuals other than the applicant including, but not limited to, drafting or substantively reviewing pleadings, legal documents, or correspondence; completing or substantively reviewing JDF forms; preparing reports or charts for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) or litigation purposes; legal research for ADR or litigation purposes; and interviewing litigants, parties, or witnesses. This work may include work as a paralegal, legal assistant, paralegal student, Family Court Facilitator (FCF), Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator (Sherlock), or law student, though working in one of those positions will only qualify if the specific work done in that position is in the nature of the work described in this paragraph.
 - b. **Performance of work.** To qualify, the work must have been performed while employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental entity, legal services nonprofit, educational facility, or other similar entity and must have included specifically delegated substantive legal work. The work must be completed on behalf of individuals who are not the applicant.

- c. **Court Employee.** Work completed in the role of a court employee may qualify for eligibility if the work meets the guidance of provisions (a) and (b) above.
- d. **Supervision.** The work must have been completed under the supervision of an active licensed attorney, judge or judicial officer in good standing in their primary state of practice.
- e. **Clerkships.** Hours worked during clerkships qualify for the “practical experience” requirements only if the clerk is providing, under supervision, legal or law-related services that meet the guidance above relating to Substantive Law-Related Practical Experience.
- f. **Research Assistants.** Hours worked in a research capacity for a professor or others do not qualify for under the “practical experience” requirement.

5. **“Colorado Family Law Experience:”**

- a. **Definition:** Colorado Family Law Experience is Substantive Law-Related Practical Experience in Colorado family law or domestic relations practice, which includes any of the following:
 - i. a legal separation, declaration of invalidity of marriage, or dissolution of a marriage or civil union;
 - ii. an initial allocation of parental responsibility (“APR”) matter, including parentage determinations, that is not part of a dissolution of a marriage or civil union;
 - iii. modification of APR regardless of whether the initial APR was part of a dissolution of a marriage or civil union, or modification of child support and/or maintenance;
 - iv. protection orders, name changes, and adult gender designation changes; and,
 - v. responding to motions for remedial contempt citations under C.R.C.P. 107.

In counting hours worked for the Colorado Family Law Experience requirement, hours worked on other types of matters do not count, even if the factual basis involves disputes or legal issues among family members.

- b. **Applicant work position/role/title.** This work may include work as a paralegal, legal assistant, paralegal student, Family Court Facilitator (FCF), Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator (Sherlock), or law student, though hours worked in one of those positions will only qualify if the work meets the Colorado Family Law Experience definition and the provisions discussed above under the Substantive Law-Related Practice.

Can an Applicant Meet Their Substantive Law-Related Practice Experience Mostly or Exclusively Through Colorado Family Law Experience?

Yes, because under Colorado Family Law Experience is defined as Substantive Law-Related Practice Experience in a particular area of law.

What Counts for the Required Ethics Class from an Accredited School?

Under Rule 207.8(5), all Colorado LLP applicants must have successfully completed an ethics class from an accredited school, and the class must be specific to LLPs or lawyers from an accredited school before sitting for the LLP Exam. Activities accredited for “continuing judicial and legal education” for licensed attorneys to take do not count as a class from an accredited school. Please refer to the general LLP Information page for updates about the availability of an LLP specific ethics course.

Documentation of course completion may be satisfied through an official transcript or certification by the school.

The majority of the schools in the United States are accredited by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), or through another entity to which the ED has delegated authority – such as to a state agency or the American Bar Association. The U.S. Department of Education maintains an online Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs, and individual institutions can be searched through the search function at: <https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/home>. Applicants who obtained a degree from a school outside the United States need to provide information of accreditation of the school from which they obtained their law degree.

Can Disbarred or Suspended Attorneys Become Licensed Legal Paraprofessionals?

No. A person who has been disbarred from the practice of law, suspended for disciplinary purposes from the practice of law, or who has resigned pending disciplinary proceedings in any jurisdiction is not eligible to apply for admission to the practice of law as an LLP in Colorado until the person has been readmitted or reinstated in the jurisdiction in which the person was disbarred, resigned, or suspended.

What is Needed to Document Eligibility Under “Path A” (Education and Experience)?

The following supporting documentation is required to determine eligibility to sit for the exam for Path A, not including the additional documentation required for the character and fitness assessment. The Office of LLP Admissions will look to the U.S. Department of Education to determine whether a school meets accreditation requirements.

Only one of these degrees is needed to satisfy eligibility under Path A. Therefore, it is not necessary to obtain additional degree documentation if an applicant has more than one degree that would satisfy Path A.

Path A: Law School – Juris Doctorate Degree

1. Official law school transcript reflecting the date the applicant’s degree was conferred and all coursework,
2. If that law school is no longer accredited by the American Bar Association or the state in which it is located, documentation of accreditation at the time of attendance and graduation,
3. Certificates of good standing for every jurisdiction, if any, in which the applicant was ever admitted to practice law,
4. Official school transcript showing completion of the required ethics course (if not already listed on another school transcript), and
5. Employment/Practice Time references to verify Substantive Law-Related Practical Experience and Colorado Family Law Experience (included in application for someone else—other than applicant – to verify).

Path A: Associate’s or Bachelor’s Degree in Paralegal Studies

1. Official school transcript reflecting the date the applicant's degree was conferred, the subject and degree conferred, and all coursework,
2. Official school transcript showing completion of the required LLP Ethics course, and
3. Employment/Practice Time references to verify Substantive Law-Related Practical Experience and Colorado Family Law Experience (included on application; applicants cannot self-verify work).

Path A: Bachelor's Degree – Any Subject with Paralegal Certificate or 15 Hours of Paralegal Studies

1. Official school transcript reflecting the date your degree was conferred, the subject and degree conferred, and all coursework,
2. If not included on the transcript, the school's documentation regarding the paralegal certificate,
3. Official school transcript showing completion of the required LLP Ethics course, and
4. Employment/Practice Time references to verify Substantive Law-Related Practical Experience and Colorado Family Law Experience (included on application; applicants cannot self-verify work).

Path A: Non-U.S. Law Degree with a Qualifying U.S. LL.M Degree

1. Official law school transcript reflecting the date your degree was conferred and all coursework,
2. The name of the entity that accredited your law school at the time of your attendance,
3. Certificates of good standing for every jurisdiction, if any, in which you were ever admitted to practice law,
4. Official school transcript for LL.M. degree that satisfies the requirements set forth in C.R.C.P. 203.4(6),
5. Official school transcript showing completion of the required LLP Ethics course, and
6. Employment/Practice Time references to verify Substantive Law-Related Practical Experience and Colorado Family Law Experience (included on application; applicants cannot self-verify work).

What is Needed to Document Eligibility Under "Path B" (Employment and Experience)?

1. Official school transcript showing completion of the required LLP Ethics course, and
2. Employment/Practice Time references to verify substantive law-related and Colorado family-law related practice time (included on application; applicant's cannot self-verify work)
3. Employment/Practice Time references to verify Substantive Law-Related Practical Experience and Colorado Family Law Experience (included on application; applicants cannot self-verify work).

What Happens if an Application is Incomplete?

The Office of LLP Admissions cannot allow an applicant who has not demonstrated eligibility to sit for the LLP Exam. Therefore, the application will be closed by the Office of LLP Admissions. If the applicant desires to apply for a later LLP exam, the Office of LLP Admissions will provide a process for re-applying, though some additional documentation likely will be necessary as well as payment of a reapplication fee.