

The following are the Standards for Admission as a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

1. **Practice Requirements.** An Applicant who has been licensed for at least six years can obtain a copy of the application for Fellowship. The completed application can then be submitted when the applicant has reached their 7th year anniversary.
 - a. Each applicant shall be a practicing attorney, who has been admitted to the bar for a minimum of seven years.
 - b. In addition to the requirement in subsection (a), for a period of five years immediately preceding the date of the application, 75% or more of the applicant's practice shall have been devoted to the area of matrimonial and family law.
 - i. This 75% practice requirement shall be an average percentage provided that in each of the last three years, the applicant shall have 75% or more of his or her practice devoted to the area of matrimonial and family law.
 - ii. Each Chartered Chapter's Board of Examiners, or the National Board of Examiners for each state with no Chartered Chapter, shall determine if an applicant practices in a geographical area where the 75% requirement would be impossible or impractical. If this is determined, the practice requirement for such applicant shall be an average of 50% or more of his or her practice devoted to the area of matrimonial and family law for a period of five years immediately preceding the date of the application. This 50% practice requirement shall be an average percentage provided that in each of the last three years, the applicant shall have 50% or more of his or her practice devoted to the area of matrimonial and family law.
2. **Continuing Legal Education Requirements.**
 - a. The applicant must have completed 12 hours of continuing legal education in the area of matrimonial and family law during each of the five years immediately preceding the date of application.
 - b. If the applicant has not met the standard set forth in subparagraph 2.a., above, the applicant shall explain in detail: a) the reason(s) that the applicant was not able to meet this standard; and b) the applicant's proposed plan to meet this standard.

3. Involvement in the Area of Matrimonial and Family Law.

Each applicant must demonstrate substantial involvement in the area of matrimonial and family law and have endeavored to encourage the study, improve the practice and elevate the standards of matrimonial and family law, as evidenced by **one or more** of the following:

- a. The applicant is a member in good standing of his or her local and state bar association, or national bar association, and the family law section of each association.
- b. The applicant served as a faculty member on a family law CLE program.
- c. The applicant served as a family law pro tem, trial judge or settlement judge, or as a master, guardian ad litem, attorney ad litem, attorney for minor child, mediator, arbitrator, or similar equivalent in the applicant's jurisdiction.
- d. The applicant served on a standing committee or executive committee of the family law section of the applicant's state or local bar association or the family law section of a National bar association.
- e. The applicant served on a judicially appointed statewide committee, task force, commission and the like, related to the subject of family law.
- f. The applicant served as an officer or director of any bar association and/or of a bar association family law committee.
- g. The applicant authored published articles on family law.
- h. The applicant participated as counsel for an appellant or appellee, or as an amicus curiae, in a family law matter presented to any appellate court.
- i. The applicant served as a professor or instructor of law school courses in the area of family law.
- j. The applicant served as an editor or publisher of any family law newsletter, journal or similar publication.
- k. The applicant authored a major treatise on marital law.

4. Competence to Litigate Complex Matrimonial and Family Matters.

The applicant must be able to competently handle complex matrimonial and family law litigation as the lead counsel. Each applicant must have substantial trial experience as lead counsel, including the trial of matters related to custody, child support, division of property, alimony, or spousal support.

5. Competence to Settle Matrimonial and Family Matters.

The applicant must be willing to and be capable of settling cases in appropriate circumstances.

6. Applicant as Practicing Attorney.

The applicant must be a practicing attorney and not a sitting judge or other full-time judicial officer. This prohibition does not include an attorney appointed part-time as a judge, commissioner, magistrate, or other judicial officer for a limited purpose, or matter.

7. National Exam.

- a. If applicant is required to take the National Exam, the Applicant must pass the National exam in order to be admitted as a Fellow to the AAML.
- b. Notwithstanding the terms of subsection (a), above, if the state in which the applicant practices has family law certification, the applicant must be certified prior to **submitting an application to become a Fellow.**
- c. An applicant may take the National Exam up to two (2) times in the current application process. If an applicant fails the exam the first time taken, and the Chapter Board of Examiners or National Board of Examiners authorizes the applicant to take the exam a second time, the applicant must take the exam within one year of the notification of his or her failure to pass the exam.
- d. If an applicant does not pass the National Exam after two (2) attempts in the application process, additional testing shall only be granted at the discretion of the Executive Committee, and subject to whatever conditions the Executive Committee deems appropriate, including a waiting period or requiring that the applicant repeat the full application process.
- e. If an applicant is not granted admission for reasons other than his or her failing the National Exam, the applicant may not reapply for admission for a period of one year from the date of rejection.

8. Chapter Exam and Interview.

- a. A Chapter may administer a written exam to applicants.
- b. Any exam which is administered by a Chapter shall be in addition to the National Exam and state board certification in the area of matrimonial and family law, as applicable.
- c. The Chapter Exam shall be in writing and may include questions which are true/false, multiple choice, short answer, essay, or some combination thereof.
- d. Chapters that administer written exams may also administer oral exams that further inquire into the subject matter of the written test.
- e. Chapters that do not administer written exams may not administer oral exams.

- f. Chapters that administer written exams shall consider the results of those exams in determining whether to recommend Fellowship. Upon request by National, the Chapter shall provide a copy of the test, model answers, and the applicant's responses.
- g. A majority of the members of the Chapter Board of Examiners shall be present for the interview of the applicant and at least one person shall be present in person. The rest may be by video or telephone conference. It is recommended that there be geographic diversity on the interviewing committee.

9. Professional Reputation.

- a. The applicant must be recognized by the bench and bar in his or her jurisdiction as one who practices with honesty, integrity and professionalism.
- b. The applicant must currently be in good standing with the disciplinary body which governs the applicant.
- c. Prior incidents of professional discipline shall be considered in the application process.

10. Adherence to the Bounds of Advocacy.

Each applicant must aspire to the Bounds of Advocacy as promulgated by the American Academy of Matrimonial and family Lawyers and the Rules of Professional Conduct or its equivalent ethical standards in the applicant's state.