



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

News for Immediate Release

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PA Supreme Court institutes new continuing education requirements for judges and justices

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has adopted continuing judicial education requirements for judges serving the Supreme, Commonwealth and Superior courts, as well as the Courts of Common Pleas, the Philadelphia Municipal Court and certified senior judges of each.

“Continuing judicial education in Pennsylvania has been on-going and is rich in its history and tradition,” said Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Thomas G. Saylor. “However, we had no formalized process to track attendance by judges covered under this order, or to ensure that we are meeting their diverse educational needs.

“A well-educated judiciary is essential to the fair and impartial administration of justice. With this order, we institutionalize our shared commitment to the highest professional standard by requiring judges to stay abreast of changes in law, procedure, behavioral science, technological advancement and legal circumstances unique to this Commonwealth.”

Beginning Jan. 1, 2017, jurists will be required to earn each year a minimum of three hours of continuing education in judicial ethics and nine hours in judicial practice and related areas.

The order also establishes a Board of Judges comprised of judges from courts impacted by the new policy, among others, and will reflect the diversity of Pennsylvania’s judiciary, including court size and divisional assignment. The Board, whose members will not be compensated, will make accreditation decisions, grant waivers and deferrals and hear non-compliance appeals.

Judges found to be non-compliant will be notified and afforded the opportunity to earn the required hours. After this grace period, judges who remain non-compliant will be referred to the Judicial Conduct Board for its consideration.

The new requirements have been under consideration for the past year and were crafted after a review of other states’ judicial education practices with input from legal scholars, judges and education specialists.

The processes and protocols associated with administering the new CJE requirements are included in a [Supreme Court order](#). Existing continuing education requirements for magisterial

district judges are included in [Title 42 of Pennsylvania Statutes](#) and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's Rules of Judicial Administration.

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