

Iowa Code Annotated

Iowa Court Rules

III. Professional Regulation

Chapter 31. Admission to the Bar (Refs & Annos)

I.C.A. Rule **31.15**

Formerly cited as IA ST CT R 114

Rule **31.15**. Permitted practice by law students and recent graduates

Currentness

31.15(1) Law students enrolled in a reputable law school as defined by rule 31.8 and **Iowa Code section 602.10102** and **certified** to the office of professional regulation by the dean of the school to have completed satisfactorily not less than the equivalent of three semesters of the work required by the school to qualify for the J.D. or LL.B. degree, may, under the following conditions, engage in the practice of law or appear as counsel in the trial or appellate courts of this state:

a. Appearance by students as defense counsel in a criminal matter in any trial court must be confined to misdemeanors, and the student must be under the direct supervision of licensed **Iowa** counsel who must be personally present.

b. Appearance by students in matters before the **Iowa** Supreme Court or the **Iowa** Court of Appeals must be under the direct supervision of licensed **Iowa** counsel who must be personally present. A student presenting an oral argument before the supreme court or the court of appeals must file with the clerk of the supreme court an appearance with proof of compliance with rule **31.15(1)**. The appearance must be filed no less than seven days prior to the argument and must be served upon all counsel of record and parties not represented by counsel.

c. Appearance or assistance by students in other matters must be under the general supervision of licensed **Iowa** counsel, but such counsel need not be personally present in court unless required by order of the court.

31.15(2) Students who the dean of a reputable law school **certifies** have completed not less than the equivalent of two semesters of work required to qualify for the J.D. or LL.B. degree may appear in a representative capacity in a contested case proceeding before an administrative agency.

a. Appearance by students who have completed only two semesters of work must be under the direct supervision of licensed **Iowa** counsel who must be personally present.

b. Students who have completed at least three semesters may appear in a representative capacity in a contested case proceeding before an administrative agency under the general supervision of licensed **Iowa** counsel, but such counsel need not be personally present unless required by order of the tribunal.

31.15(3) Except as allowed by rule **31.15(4)**, students may not engage in the practice of law or appear as counsel in any court of this state or before an administrative agency unless such practice or appearance is part of an educational program approved by the faculty of the students' law school and not disapproved by the **Iowa** Supreme Court, and such program is supervised by at least one member of the law school's faculty. Students may continue to practice before courts or administrative agencies of this state after completion of an educational program so long as the placement is substantially the same as it was during the educational program, approved by the law school, and performed with the supervision required under rules **31.15(1)** and **31.15(2)**.

31.15(4) Law students may assist licensed **Iowa** counsel to the same extent as a non-attorney without being part of an educational program or being **certified** to the office of professional regulation, but the students must be under the general supervision of licensed **Iowa** counsel who need not be personally present. Law students may not appear in representative capacities in contested case proceedings before administrative agencies without complying with rules **31.15(2)** and **31.15(3)**, or before trial or appellate courts without complying with rule **31.15(1)**.

31.15(5) Law students must not receive compensation other than general compensation from an employer-attorney or from a law-school-administered fund.

31.15(6) Graduates of reputable law schools who have applied to take the **Iowa** bar examination are authorized to perform all activities described in this rule on behalf of the public defender's office, the attorney general's office, county attorney offices, or approved legal aid organizations under the following conditions:

a. Supervision of graduates must be the same as supervision of law students under rules **31.15(1)** and **31.15(2)**, but graduates do not need to meet the requirements of rule **31.15(3)**.

b. Graduates may perform under this rule beginning with the receipt of a law school dean's **certification** of graduation and terminating either upon the withdrawal or denial of their application to take the **Iowa** bar examination, their failure of the next administration of the **Iowa** bar examination, or upon the date of the admissions ceremony for those who pass that examination.

c. Graduates may practice up to 25 hours per week from receipt of a J.D. or LL.B. degree until the administration of the next **Iowa** bar examination.

d. Graduates are not limited in hours of practice under this rule from administration of the bar examination until the date the

bar examination results are posted for those who fail or the date of the admissions ceremony for those who pass.

e. Graduates who have failed any **state bar** examination in the past are not eligible to practice under this provision.

f. The supervising organizations listed in rule **31.15(6)** must file a **certificate** with the office of professional regulation listing the starting dates for all graduates practicing under rule **31.15(6)** and must file a second **certificate** indicating when the practice under this rule has terminated.

31.15(7) For purposes of this rule, an “approved legal aid organization” includes a program sponsored by a bar association, law school, or a not-for-profit legal aid organization, approved by the **Iowa** Supreme Court, whose primary purpose is to provide legal representation to low-income persons in **Iowa**.

a. A legal aid organization seeking approval from the court for the purposes of this rule must file a petition with the office of professional regulation **certifying** that it is a not-for-profit organization and reciting with specificity the following:

(1) The structure of the organization and whether it accepts funds from its clients.

(2) The major sources of funds the organization uses.

(3) The criteria used to determine potential clients’ eligibility for legal services the organization performs.

(4) The types of legal and nonlegal services the organization performs.

(5) The names of all members of the **Iowa** bar who are employed by the organization or who regularly perform legal work for the organization.

(6) The existence and extent of malpractice insurance that will cover the law student or graduate.

b. An organization designated as an approved legal aid organization under the provisions of rule 31.19(2)(c) is an approved legal aid organization for purposes of this rule.

31.15(8) A law student or law graduate practicing under this rule must be identified by the title “Law Student” or “Law Graduate” in any filing made in the courts of this state.

Credits

Renumbered from Rule 114 and amended Nov. 9, 2001, eff. Feb. 15, 2002. Amended June 5, 2008, eff. July 1, 2008; March 21, 2014, eff. March 21, 2014; Nov. 20, 2015, eff. Jan. 1, 2016; Nov. 18, 2016, eff. March 1, 2017; Dec. 13, 2017, eff. Jan. 1, 2018.

Editors’ Notes

Relevant Additional Resources

Additional Resources listed below contain your search terms.

HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES

The amendment by Order dated June 5, 2008, effective July 1, 2008, substituted “office of professional regulation” for “supreme court of **Iowa**” in the first paragraph of subrule **31.15(1)**.

The amendment by order dated and immediately effective March 21, 2014, in the rule name line, inserted “and recent graduates”; in the introductory paragraph of subrule **31.15(1)**, substituted “Law students” for “A law student”; in subrule **31.15(1)a.**, inserted “trial” and “the student”; in subrule **31.15(1)c.**, inserted “or assistance” and “personally”; in subrule **31.15(2)**, in the first sentence, substituted “Students” for “A student”, inserted “of a reputable law school”, designated the second sentence, as subrule **31.15(2)a.**, and inserted subrule **31.15(2)b.**; rewrote subrule **31.15(3)**; inserted subrule **31.15(4)**; redesignated former subrule **31.15(4)** as subrule **31.15(5)**, and therein substituted “Law students” for “A student”; added subrules **31.15(6)** and **(7)**; and made a nonsubstantive change. Prior to amendment, subrule **31.15(3)** read:

“**31.15(3)** No student may engage in the practice of law or appear as counsel in any court of this state or before an administrative agency unless such practice or appearance is part of an educational program approved by the faculty of the student’s law school and not disapproved by the supreme court of the state of **Iowa**, and such program is supervised by at least one member of the law school’s faculty.”

The amendment by Order dated November 20, 2015, effective January 1, 2016, added subrule **31.15(8)**.

The amendment by Order dated Nov. 18, 2016, effective March 1, 2017, in subrule **31.15(1)b**, inserted the second and third sentences.

The amendment by Order dated Dec. 13, 2017, effective Jan. 1, 2018, substituted “must” for “shall” throughout; in subrule **31.15(6)f.**, substituted “office of professional regulation” for “Office of Professional Regulation of the **Iowa** Supreme Court (OPR)”; in subrule **31.15(7)**, deleted “Approved Legal Aid Organization.” from the beginning of the introductory paragraph; in subrule **31.15(7)a.**, substituted “the office of professional regulation” for “OPR”; in subrule **31.15(8)**, inserted “or law

graduate” and “or ‘Law Graduate’ “; and made nonsubstantive changes.

Derivation:

Rule 114.

Court Order Jan. 9, 1998, eff. Feb. 2, 1998.

Rule 114.

Amended June 5, 1996, eff. July 1, 1996.

Rule 120.

Amended, eff. April 28, 1987.

Rule 120.

Amended, eff. April 8, 1980.

Rule 120.

Amended, eff. April 9, 1975.

Rule 120.

Amended, eff. April 8, 1975 [withdrawn].

Rule 120.

Amended, eff. Jan. 14, 1974.

Rule 120.

Amended, eff. May 15, 1972.

Rule 120.

Court Order April 4, 1967.

RESEARCH REFERENCES

Treatises and Practice Aids

11 [Iowa Practice Series § 1:9](#), [Iowa](#) Judicial Branch--[Iowa](#) Supreme Court--Supervision of Attorneys.

16 [Iowa Practice Series § 2:1\(f\)](#), Admission to the Practice of Law--Law Student Practice Rule.

Notes of Decisions containing your search terms (0)

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I. C. A. Rule [31.15](#), IA R [31.15](#)

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