

Foreign Legal Consultant Licensure vs. Bar Admission

In order to take the Iowa Bar examination, Iowa Court Rule 31.8 requires that an applicant show proof that s/he has earned a “degree of LL.B. or J.D. from a reputable law school fully approved by the American Bar Association (ABA)”. But what do you do if you’re already licensed to practice law in a foreign jurisdiction and you don’t necessarily want to become a full member of the Iowa Bar? If you simply want to be able to affiliate with members of the Iowa Bar, including being a partner or a shareholder of a business entity with Iowa lawyers, rather than rendering legal advice on the laws of Iowa or the United States, you can apply for licensure as a **foreign legal consultant**.

What are the basic requirements to be licensed as a foreign legal consultant?

- Applicants must have been a member in good standing of a recognized legal profession in a foreign country.
- The members of that legal profession must be subject to effective regulation and discipline by a duly constituted professional body or public authority.
- Applicants must have been lawfully practicing law for at least five years in the foreign country or elsewhere, with such practice substantially relating to the rendering of advice or provision of legal services concerning the law of the foreign country.
- Applicant must be of good moral character and fit to practice law.
- Applicant must intend to practice as a foreign legal consultant in Iowa and maintain an office for that purpose in this state.

This, and additional information, such as fees, filing information, pertinent Iowa Court Rules and further restrictions, can be found at

http://www.iowacourts.gov/Professional_Regulation/Bar_Admission_Practice_Rules/Foreign_Legal_Consultant/

What if I want to be a member of the Iowa Bar rather than a foreign legal consultant?

In addition to earning an LL.M., you will want to take courses that can adequately prepare you for the bar examination.

- Contact Dean Carin Crain at The University of Iowa College of Law about the possibility of undertaking appropriate coursework for bar preparation.
 - Dean Crain and Professor John C. Reitz, the Director of the LL.M. Program, will assess your legal education/experience and determine what courses will best prepare you for the Iowa Bar examination.
 - Based on their assessment, Dean Crain and Professor Reitz will recommend a course of supplemental classes for you to take.
- Once Dean Crain and Professor Reitz have made their determinations, submit a petition to the Iowa Board of Law Examiners (IBLE) for a waiver of Rule 31.8 and permission to take the bar examination.
 - You must provide an affidavit from the Dean of The University of Iowa College of Law in support of your petition.
 - The affidavit certifies that you have successfully completed the recommended coursework.
- If you are deemed qualified (e.g. no character or fitness problems), you can then take the Iowa Bar examination.

Can I be admitted to the Iowa Bar without examination?

Yes, but only if you have already been admitted to the Bar in another U.S. state and have practiced law for five of the seven years preceding the application date.