

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Judicial Branch
Supreme Court

Class Codes: Level I: 2558
Level II: 2559
Level III: 2561
Level IV: 2562

October 2010

LEGAL ADVISOR
(SUPREME COURT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL ETHICS OPINIONS)

DEFINITION

Article VI, section 18(m) of the California Constitution charges the Supreme Court with adopting the Code of Judicial Ethics to govern the conduct of judges and judicial candidates. The Supreme Court has adopted rule 9.80 of the California Rules of Court and established the Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions to provide judicial ethics advisory opinions and advice to judicial officers and candidates for judicial office. The committee acts independently of the Supreme Court, the Commission on Judicial Performance, the Judicial Council, and all other entities.

Under direction, the legal advisor performs legal duties in support of the Supreme Court's Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions, assists in the development of procedures for the Committee; including conducting research of legal issues, drafting opinions, providing legal opinions and advice and performs related work as assigned.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

Legal Advisor is an entry- to experienced-level legal series. Entry-level incumbents may be responsible for small or discrete legal tasks, or may assist with more complex projects; as experience is gained, there is greater independence of action within established guidelines. Experienced-level incumbents are fully competent to perform independently the full range of legal tasks assigned to them. These classifications are distinguished from the Senior Legal Advisor classification in that the latter will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Committee. The Senior Legal Advisor will report directly to the Committee Chair. Incumbents in the Legal Advisor classification series will assist the Senior Legal Advisor with all Committee operations and conduct of all of the Committee's activities, subject to the direction of the Committee Chair.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES (*illustrative only*)

- Works independently and collaboratively.
- Assists the committee in:
 - Reviewing, evaluating, and analyzing pertinent documents, questions, and requests for advice in order to evaluate and assess the ethical issues, and the scope and complexity of inquiries received.

- Researching the applicable law contained in the Code of Judicial Ethics, statutes, constitutions, and precedent.
- Preparing formal written opinions.
- Drafting memoranda, opinions, and requests for supplemental information.

WORKING CONDITIONS

- Work occasional evening and weekend hours.
- May be required to travel statewide as necessary.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Knowledge and understanding of the California Code of Judicial Ethics and related ethical issues.
- Substantive and procedural legal principles and applications relating to ethics.
- Scope and character of California and federal statutory and case law and provisions of the United States and California Constitutions; California Rules of Court; the legislative process; statutes and constitutional provisions governing the organization, duties, powers, procedures, management, and the work of the trial and appellate courts.
- Legal research methods.
- Principles of administrative and constitutional law.
- Rules of evidence and procedure in California trial and appellate courts.
- The operation of personal computers and the use of specified computer applications, such as word processing.
- Principles and techniques of preparing effective oral presentations.
- Principles and techniques of preparing a variety of effective written materials.

Ability to:

- Work under the direction and supervision of the senior legal advisor, the Committee Chair and the Committee.
- Perform complex legal research, including computerized legal research; apply legal principles and precedents to particular sets of facts.
- Analyze legal issues; present statements of facts, law, policy, and argument clearly, concisely, and logically in both written and oral form.
- Draft legal opinions, briefs, and other legal documents and correspondence.
- Interact successfully with justices, committee members, court and agency staff, judicial branch members, and the public.
- Exercise sound judgment and integrity consistent with representing the judicial branch; maintain confidentiality of work product.
- Organize own work, set priorities, and meet critical deadlines.
- Operate personal computers and use specified computer applications, such as word processing.
- Communicate effectively in English, orally and in writing.

- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of the work.

Licenses and Certificates:

Active membership in the State Bar of California.

Education and Experience:

Level I: Active membership in the State Bar of California and the equivalent of three years of post-bar legal experience in a legal setting such as a private law practice, corporation, government agency, law school, court, or legal publishing company.

Level II: Active membership in the State Bar of California and the equivalent of four years of post-bar legal experience in a legal setting such as a private law practice, corporation, government agency, law school, court, or legal publishing company.

Level III: Active membership in the State Bar of California and the equivalent of six years of post-bar legal experience in a legal setting such as a private law practice, corporation, government agency, law school, court, or legal publishing company.

Level IV: Active membership in the State Bar of California and equivalent of eight years of post-bar legal experience in a legal setting such as a private law practice, corporation, government agency, law school, court, or legal publishing company.