

PETITION FOR RULEMAKING

North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission

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Rules Proposed for Amendment

12 NCAC 09B .0101 — Minimum Standards for Law Enforcement Officers

12 NCAC 09B .0106 — Documentation of Educational Requirements

I. Proposed Rule Change

I respectfully petition the Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission to consider amending 12 NCAC 09B .0101 and 12 NCAC 09B .0106 to establish a narrowly defined **competency-based alternative pathway** for otherwise qualified applicants who do not possess a traditional high-school diploma or state-recognized high-school equivalency credential.

The proposed pathway would **not** eliminate BLET, the state examination, background requirements, medical or psychological requirements, firearms requirements, or any other applicable certification standards. Instead, an eligible applicant could demonstrate competency through a standardized assessment approved and administered under the authority of the Commission.

Proposed concept: An applicant who does not possess documentation meeting the educational requirements may be considered for entry into an approved competency-based assessment established by the Commission. Successful completion of the assessment would not constitute certification as a criminal justice officer and would not waive any other statutory or regulatory requirement for employment or certification. An applicant who successfully completes the assessment would remain subject to all requirements for admission to and successful completion of Basic Law Enforcement Training and all applicable requirements for certification.

Potential assessment components

- Reading comprehension
- Written communication and report writing
- Criminal and constitutional law
- Physical fitness
- Firearms safety and qualification
- Emergency vehicle operations
- First aid and CPR
- Communication and de-escalation
- Scenario-based decision-making
- Ethics and integrity

- Background and character investigation
- Evaluation of relevant employment, military, security, public-safety, leadership, or community experience

II. Reason for the Proposal

I am submitting this petition because I have personally encountered the current educational requirement. I completed my education through a correspondence-school program. However, North Carolina does not recognize my particular correspondence-school diploma for purposes of satisfying the educational requirement for law-enforcement certification.

As a result, I am required to obtain a GED/high-school equivalency credential before I can pursue the normal BLET pathway.

I am not asking the Commission to make an exception for me. I am asking the Commission to consider whether the current system should provide a carefully controlled alternative through which people in circumstances similar to mine can demonstrate whether they actually possess the abilities necessary to succeed in law-enforcement training.

I currently work in private security and have pursued armed-security training. Those experiences do not automatically make me qualified to become a police officer, nor should they exempt me from BLET or the state's certification standards. However, they demonstrate why I believe real-world competency and experience can provide information that a single educational credential does not.

A high-school diploma or GED establishes an educational credential. It does not, by itself, establish integrity, judgment under pressure, communication ability, physical fitness, firearms safety, emergency driving ability, de-escalation skills, leadership, or ethical decision-making. The proposed pathway would allow those qualities to be evaluated objectively.

III. Public-Safety Safeguards

This proposal is specifically intended **not to lower professional standards**.

- 1 Meet all applicable statutory requirements.
- 2 Pass the Commission's competency assessment.
- 3 Successfully complete BLET.
- 4 Pass the applicable state examination.
- 5 Successfully complete required background investigations.
- 6 Satisfy applicable medical and psychological requirements.
- 7 Meet firearms and other applicable standards.
- 8 Receive employment from a law-enforcement agency.
- 9 Meet all other requirements for certification.

IV. Proposed Pilot Program

I respectfully suggest that the Commission initially consider this as a limited pilot program rather than immediately making the pathway available statewide without evaluation.

For example, a limited number of applicants could be admitted to the assessment each year. The Commission could then collect objective data regarding assessment pass/failure rates, BLET enrollment and completion, state examination performance, certification, hiring, one-, three-, and five-year retention, disciplinary actions,

performance concerns, and other relevant measures of professional performance.

The results could be reviewed before determining whether the program should be continued, modified, expanded, or discontinued.

V. Persons Affected

The proposed change would primarily affect individuals who seek a career in North Carolina law enforcement; do not possess a traditional high-school diploma or recognized high-school equivalency credential; have otherwise demonstrated relevant experience or qualifications; and are willing to meet the same professional training and certification standards as other applicants. It could also affect law-enforcement agencies seeking qualified applicants and the Commission responsible for establishing and enforcing certification standards.

VI. Request

I respectfully request that the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission accept this petition for consideration under **12 NCAC 09A .0107** and determine whether formal rulemaking should be initiated.

I am not asking North Carolina to lower the bar.

I am asking North Carolina to give qualified people another way to prove they can clear it.

Thank you for considering this petition.

Respectfully,

Caleb Lassiter

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