

Sidley Austin jumps on ABA accreditation opportunity; you can, too

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Recently [approved](#) by the American Bar Association, the Privacy Law Specialist designation is the 15th specialty ever accredited by the ABA. Since the IAPP announced applications are officially being accepted, there's been no shortage of privacy pros inquiring just how to get the coveted accreditation. Don't worry. The Privacy Advisor has the scoop how to apply, and why one law firm decided to embrace the designation in a big way.

Those interested in becoming among the first to earn the distinction can now apply through the IAPP. The first submission window, which began April 2 and ends June 30, will usher in the first wave of lawyers seeking to highlight their experience and expertise in the privacy field.

The Privacy Law Specialist designation signifies substantial time practicing U.S. state and federal law relating to safeguarding personal information; knowledge of relevant privacy laws, regulations, and technology; and a commitment to staying ahead of new developments.

The website for the ABA Standing Committee on Specialization remarked on the decision, [stating](#) that the “accreditation of the IAPP’s extra-rigorous program for American lawyers practicing law in the field of data privacy and security will serve as a trustworthy badge of the credentials value and bona fides.”

It's not just privacy attorneys individually indicating interest, though. Sidley Austin is the first law firm to embrace the accreditation broadly, making the ABA privacy specialist accreditation available to members of its privacy and cybersecurity practice. And it has set the bar high — it anticipates that its privacy and cybersecurity partners, senior counsel, and counsel privacy practitioners will begin the process for accreditation this year.

“IAPP has been a leader in providing education, guidance and networking opportunities for lawyers practicing in the constantly evolving field of privacy, and Sidley has been a longtime supporter of and participant in IAPP’s educational programming,” said Alan Raul, partner with Sidley Austin and leader of its Privacy and Cybersecurity Practice. “Thanks to the efforts of the IAPP and ABA to move the privacy bar forward through this law accreditation program, clients now have an additional means of evaluating privacy professionals to meet their increasingly complex privacy challenges.”

“The recognition of the Privacy Law Specialist Program by a leading global law firm proves the significance and relevance of the privacy specialization in the legal field,” said IAPP President and CEO Trevor Hughes. “We’re pleased that Sidley has so proactively embraced this accreditation as we roll out this program to law firms and lawyers around the U.S.”

For candidates interested in pursuing the privacy credential, there are specific requirements. These include that the candidate must be an attorney in good standing in at least one U.S. state; hold the CIPP/US designation, as well as either a CIPT or CIPM; pass an ethics exam

administered by the IAPP, or submit a recent MPRE score of 80 or above; provide proof of “ongoing and substantial” involvement practicing privacy; submit evidence of at least 36 hours of participation in qualified continuing legal education in the field of privacy law for the past three years; and at least five peer references from attorneys, clients or judges who can attest to the candidate’s privacy law qualifications.

Attorneys looking to submit, please note that accreditation by the ABA indicates solely that the IAPP’s Privacy Law Specialist designation has met the ABA’s standards. While roughly one-half of U.S. state bar organizations recognize ABA accreditation law specialty programs, rules regarding attorney advertising vary by state and can generally be found in rule seven of a state’s Rules of Professional Conduct.

To apply, candidates must email pls@iapp.org to start the application process and receive the forms needed for submission. Once approved, candidates will receive a digital designation badge from the IAPP and the opportunity to be included in a searchable directory of specialists on the IAPP website.

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