

Maryland Judiciary

Analysis of Case Processing Performance in the Court of Appeals

September Term, 2017



Administrative Office of the Courts

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Introduction

The Court of Appeals adopted case time standards effective for its September Term, 2013 (the period spanning September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2014). The case processing goals adopted by the Court provide that all cases argued^a (or filed, depending on the appeal type) during a Term are to be decided before the Term's completion. This goal is similar to that of the U.S. Supreme Court and is an expansion of the Judiciary's commitment, which began in the trial courts, to ensure timely adjudication for all those with business before the courts. Case time standards are central to the Maryland Judiciary's mission to provide fair, efficient, and effective justice for all.

This report contains performance results against the Court's case time standards for September Term, 2017.

Methodology

Case processing performance in the Court of Appeals is based on all cases argued (or filed for certain types of appeals) during the Court's September Term, 2017.^b The Court's case time standards begin at the date of argument for appeals on its Regular Docket, Certified Questions of Law, and Attorney Grievance Cases, and at filing for Extraordinary Writs and Bar Admissions. See Appendix for the complete table of case time standards in the Court of Appeals.

Upon the conclusion of the September Term, 2017, the Clerk of the Court of Appeals supplied the Court's docket sheets to researchers at the Administrative Office of the Courts. Research staff entered the pertinent data fields from all cases filed or argued during the September Term, 2017, including case number, caption (case title), argument date, filing date, and disposition date (opinion, dismissal, or other order/disposition) into data analysis software. Data quality checks were performed comparing the data entry to the docket sheets and to the electronic record in the Maryland Electronic Case Management (MDEC) system.

Research staff calculated the number and percentage of appeals disposed within standard as a proportion of the total number of cases argued or filed (depending on the appeal type) during the Court's September Term, 2017. Average and median case processing times for all disposed cases were also computed.

^a The Court of Appeals typically hears cases from September through June.

^b The Court disposed of a number of cases during the period examined (September 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018) that did not contain an argument. These cases were not subject to this analysis.

Overall Performance Results

The Court of Appeals achieved the case time standard goal in each of the appeal types during the September Term, 2017. See Tables 1 and 2. All 76 Regular Docket cases were disposed within the Term and took an average of 109 days from argument to disposition. The next largest number of cases were Extraordinary Writs, in which all 40 filed within September Term, 2017 reached disposition, and took an average of 19 days from filing to disposition.

All seven Attorney Grievance appeals that contained an argument were decided within the Term and took an average of 68 days from argument to disposition. There were four Bar Admission appeals filed in the Court in September Term, 2017, and each of them was disposed within that Term, taking an average of 198 days from filing to disposition. For September Term, 2017, there were two Certified Questions of Law appeals argued, taking an average of 72 days to disposition.

Table 1. Cases Disposed Within Time Standard Goals, Court of Appeals, September Term, 2017

Case Type	Time Standard	Judiciary Goal	September Term, 2017 Cases ¹	Number of Cases Disposed Within Standard	% Within Standard
Regular Docket	Argument to Disposition	Cases argued must be decided before the end of the term (100%)	76	76	100%
Certified Questions of Law			2	2	100%
Attorney Grievances			7	7	100%
Extraordinary Writs	Filing to Disposition	Cases filed must be decided before the end of the term (100%)	40	40	100%
Bar Admissions			4	4	100%

¹ The number of September Term, 2017 cases represents either the number of cases, (1) argued, or (2) filed, depending on the appeal type.

Table 2. Overall Average & Median Case Processing Times, Court of Appeals, September Term, 2017

Case Type	Time Standard	September Term, 2017 Overall Average & Median Case Times (in days)	
		Overall Average	Overall Median
Regular Docket	Argument to Disposition	109	99
Certified Questions of Law	Cases argued must be decided before the end of the term.	72	72
Attorney Grievances		68	46
Extraordinary Writs	Filing to Disposition	19	5
Bar Admissions	Cases filed must be decided before the end of the term.	198	218

APPENDIX: Court of Appeals Case Time Standards

Court of Appeals Case Time Standards

Proceeding/Appeal Type	Standard	Case Time Start	Stay Begins (Suspends the standard)	Stay Ends	Case Time Stop	Comments
Regular Docket	Cases must be decided before end of term.	Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Disposition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion Filed Dismissed Order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Policy beginning with the 2013 Term (September 1, 2013 – August 31, 2014)
Extraordinary Writs	Cases must be decided before end of term.	Filing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Disposition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion Filed Dismissed Order 	
Bar Admissions	Cases must be decided before end of term.	Filing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Disposition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion Filed Dismissed Order 	
Certified Questions of Law	Cases must be decided before end of term.	Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Disposition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion Filed Dismissed Order 	
Attorney Grievances	Cases must be decided before end of term.	Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Disposition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion Filed Dismissed Order 	