



# THE BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS

# WISCONSIN COURT SYSTEM

*The Board of Bar Examiners (BBE) was formed on January 1st, 1991, from two existing Wisconsin Supreme Court boards: the Board of Continuing Legal Education and the Board of Bar Commissioners.*

The Board of Continuing Legal Education was created to administer the Wisconsin Supreme Court's mandatory continuing legal education (CLE) requirements for lawyers. The Board of Bar Commissioners was charged with administering bar admission and compliance with the Code of Professional Responsibility. These functions are now combined under BBE.

## BBE FUNCTIONS

As a board of the Supreme Court, BBE administers mandatory Wisconsin CLE requirements and bar admissions by either examination or proof of practice. Effective October 1st, 1995, BBE began conducting character and fitness investigations for all candidates for bar admission by "diploma privilege." Under diploma privilege, graduates of the University of Wisconsin Law School or the Marquette University Law School do *not* have to take the Wisconsin bar exam to practice law in Wisconsin — as long as a Wisconsin law school certifies legal competence and BBE certifies character and fitness.

## SERVING ON BBE

The Board of Bar Examiners has eleven members. In accordance with Supreme Court Rule 30.01, there are five seats for lawyers; three for judges and law school faculty; and three for non-lawyer members of the public.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court appoints members of BBE to an initial three-year term, followed by one successive three-year term. The Board meets approximately eight times per year. All Board members serve without compensation but are reimbursed for necessary travel expenses, which includes overnight accommodations for those traveling more than 50 miles to attend meetings. Twice a year, lawyer members of the Board grade the Wisconsin bar exam.

The Board also has an office and a staff of eight employees. Board employees work year-round to prepare and register applicants for the bar exam, which occurs twice yearly in Madison.

## ONLINE CLE CREDIT REPORTING

In 2008, BBE launched an online system for reporting CLE credits. Several improvements have been made to the CLE electronic reporting system since its initial launch, including the ability to electronically sign report forms. All attorneys are now required to fully file their CLE credits online.

## FUNDING

The mandatory CLE requirement function is funded through an annual assessment on all lawyers licensed to practice in Wisconsin. Additional money comes from late filing and reinstatement fees authorized by the Supreme Court. The bar admissions portion of BBE responsibilities is entirely self-funded with fees authorized by the Court.

*Interested in applying to serve on BBE?*

Visit [wicourts.gov/courts/committees/participate.htm](http://wicourts.gov/courts/committees/participate.htm) to learn more.