



# Supreme Court of Wisconsin

BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS  
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## **INFORMATION AND FILING INSTRUCTIONS**

2011 Diploma Privilege Character and Fitness Certification (SCR 40.03)

Individuals seeking admission to the practice of law in Wisconsin via the diploma privilege are required under Supreme Court Rule 40.06 to file an Application for Character and Fitness Certification with the Board of Bar Examiners (BBE). A character and fitness investigation then follows and typically takes three to six months to complete. Students who graduate in May and who wish to participate in the large-group swearing-in ceremonies that are held in May and June must have their files completed in advance of those swearing-in dates. The BBE determines when a file is complete. Applicants are responsible for checking the status of their files and will only be notified by the BBE in writing when they are certified for admission.

**READ THIS INFORMATION CAREFULLY AND RETAIN IT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.** All deadlines relate to date of receipt at the Board of Bar Examiners' office during regular business hours (7:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, except holidays). The deadlines noted below are certain; extensions will not be allowed. Facsimile or email transmissions will not be accepted. An application will not be considered filed until proper payment is received. **RETAIN A COPY OF THE APPLICANT QUESTIONNAIRE AND AFFIDAVIT FOR YOUR RECORDS.** A fee will be charged for a copy of your application should you need it at a later date.

### **FILING DATES, DEADLINES, AND FEES:**

It is to your advantage to file as early as possible in order to avoid late fees. Applications submitted to the BBE after the final deadlines noted below will not be accepted and Wisconsin law school graduates will be required to write and pass the Wisconsin Bar Examination in order to be eligible for admission to the practice of law in Wisconsin. Processing of an application file typically takes three to six months to complete.

**NOTE:** An application is considered "**Filed**" when all three of the following items have been received:

1. Application form (BE-001)
2. Authorization and Release form (BE-002)
3. Filing Fee (See fees below)

#### May 2011 Graduates

\$210 if application is filed by December 15, 2010  
\$410 if application is filed from December 16, 2010 until July 1, 2011.

#### August 2011 Graduates

\$210 if application is filed by March 15, 2011  
\$410 if application is filed from March 16, 2011 until October 3, 2011.

#### December 2011 Graduates

\$210 if application is filed by July 15, 2011  
\$410 if application is filed from July 16, 2011 until February 1, 2012.

## STEP ONE: BEGINNING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

ALL THREE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE FINAL FILING DEADLINE AT THE BBE OFFICE FOR AN APPLICATION TO BE CONSIDERED FILED:

- (1) **Application form (BE-001):** Applicants must complete an original application. Answers must be typewritten or computer generated. Handwritten applications, applications which are not properly notarized, or applications that are not accompanied by the proper payment will be returned unprocessed. The application form is an affidavit and the Board will address omissions and misrepresentations under its character and fitness rule, SCR 40.06.
- (2) **Authorization and Release form (BE-002):** Applicants must complete this form and have it notarized.
- (3) **Filing Fee:** The applicable filing fee (See the fees on Page One) must be remitted by a check or money order, payable to the **Board of Bar Examiners**.

## STEP TWO: COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

All applicants must submit the following items:

- (1) **Official Transcripts:** Every applicant must arrange to have all transcripts furnished directly to the BBE by the educational institution including:
  - (a) Undergraduate transcript: The BBE requires an official transcript from undergraduate schools (including College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations) that conferred a degree, including an associate degree. The BBE may require official transcripts from undergraduate schools attended but which conferred no degree. Applicants will be notified if this is required.
  - (b) Law school transcripts: The BBE requires an official transcript showing that you have completed a minimum of 50 credit hours. A final law school transcript is not required.
  - (c) Other transcripts: The BBE requires a transcript from all schools attended after an undergraduate degree was conferred, including other law schools you may have attended, summer schools, foreign study (including foreign exchange programs), technical schools, graduate schools, medical schools, etc.
- (2) **Military Discharge Certificate:** If you served in the Armed Forces, it will be necessary for you to provide the BBE with a copy of your most recent DD-Form-214 (Report of Separation). If you served in the National Guard, provide your most recent NGB-Form 22.
- (3) **Character Reference Questionnaires:** Select as character references (Question 36) persons who have known you for no less than two years and who are familiar with your character and fitness. Do not include any family members, in-laws, fiancé/fiancée, significant other(s), or anticipated future family members. Refer to the Character Reference Questionnaire (BE-101) for further instructions.
- (4) **LSAC Number (Law School Admission Council):** Most applicants who took the LSAT (Law School Admission Test) will already have a LSAC number. Applicants who do not have a record of this number or do not have a number can log on to [www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org) to either look up the number or register for one.

- (5) **Wisconsin Driving Abstract:** Every applicant must arrange to have his or her Wisconsin driving abstract sent directly to the BBE. If there is no record, a request still must be made and the state agency will indicate “no record”. You must request a drivers’ record even if you do not hold a drivers’ license in Wisconsin. Information and required forms needed to obtain a driving abstract can be found online at [www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/forms/mv2896.pdf](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/forms/mv2896.pdf).
- (6) **Wisconsin Criminal History:** Every applicant must arrange to have a copy of his or her Wisconsin criminal history sent directly to the BBE. Obtain Form DJ-LE-250 from this website <http://wi-recordcheck.org>. Use this form to request a statewide Crime Information Bureau criminal background check. There is an \$12.00 fee for the record check. Applicants should not include a postage paid envelope but should write in the return to area “**Forward To Board of Bar Examiners**”. If there is no history, a request still must be made and the state agency will indicate “no record”.
- (7) **Other Requested Items:** Typical items may include criminal history reports and driving abstracts from jurisdictions other than Wisconsin.

All items, except military discharge certificates, must be sent directly to the BBE by the issuing institution or agency. Facsimile transmissions are not accepted. Applicants should refrain from furnishing an addressed, stamped envelope to the institution, as this practice makes the origin of the documents unclear. If, however, certifying officials require that you supply a stamped envelope, use a plain white envelope, with a U.S. postage stamp affixed to it, and ask that the office from which it is being mailed rubber stamp or type its name and address on the envelope across the seal flap, as well as on the front.

Do not provide documentation that is not specifically requested in the application or in the filing instructions. Once an application is reviewed, staff will contact applicants in writing to request any other required documentation. Any such additional documentation must be obtained by the applicant at the applicant’s expense. Applicants will not be certified for admission until all required documents are on file. The BBE will close the file of any applicant whose file remains incomplete one year from the date an application is filed with the Board, and Wisconsin law school graduates will then be required to write and pass the Wisconsin Bar Examination in order to be eligible for admission to the practice of law in Wisconsin. Applicants are responsible for checking the status of their applications.

**STEP THREE: CHANGES/AMENDMENTS TO AN APPLICATION**

Applications must be kept current. All applicants are reminded of their continuing obligation to update a pending application. Applicants wishing to augment or alter entries to their application affidavit, including name changes, are advised to execute amendment form (BE-010).

Applicants who change their names for any reason during the pendency of their application must execute an amendment form (BE-010), setting forth the former and present names, the reason for the change, the effective date of the change, and must attach any relevant documents, such as a marriage license, etc.

The BBE will communicate its actions in writing to you at the last address you provided the BBE in writing. Address and telephone number changes must be submitted in writing, signed and dated, but need not be submitted on the amendment affidavit. They may also be submitted on a Change of Address Notification form (BE-009). Facsimile or email transmissions are not accepted.

## **AVOIDING DELAY IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

It is the applicant's responsibility to contact the BBE regarding the status of his or her pending file. To expedite the processing of an application, use care in completing it. Applications that are carelessly or incompletely prepared cause delays in processing. Be sure to answer all portions of each question completely. Provide as many details and as much information as possible to avoid delay in processing your application. If unable to recall necessary details, applicants must offer an explanation as to why the required information was not provided. State "not applicable" if appropriate. Supply complete addresses, including zip codes, where requested. Account for any gaps as instructed on the application itself. Do not provide documents not specifically requested in the application or in the filing instructions. If the BBE requires further documentation, its staff will make a request in writing.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

All applicants will be notified by the Board in writing when their files are complete and they are certified for admission. The BBE will communicate its actions in writing and will send those communications to the applicant's last address provided to the BBE.

Application files are confidential under SCR 40.12. Therefore, the BBE and its staff will discuss the contents of an application only with applicants. Do not communicate with the BBE or its staff via email or facsimile transmission or arrange to have requested documents or proofs sent to the BBE via email or facsimile transmission from a third party.

The authorization and release form you submit to the BBE may be used to confirm information contained in your application and for examination of your law school records.

## **COPIES OF APPLICATIONS**

Keep a copy of your completed application for reference purposes in the event that the BBE staff needs to contact you with questions about the information you provided. A copy of your application and amendments is available upon receipt of a written request and payment of \$10 for a copy or \$12 for a certified copy. Copies of information obtained by the BBE from third parties will not be released to applicants.

## **FORMS**

The following forms are available online at [www.wicourts.gov](http://www.wicourts.gov).

SCR Chapter 40  
SCR Chapter 40 Appendix  
Applicant Questionnaire and Affidavit (BE-001)  
Authorization and Release (BE-002)  
Debts form (BE-005)  
Traffic Violations Form (BE-007)  
Law Violations Form (BE-008)  
Change of Address Notification (BE-009)  
Amendment to Application (BE-010)  
Character Reference Questionnaire (BE-101)