



Supreme Court of Wisconsin

BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS
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INFORMATION AND FILING INSTRUCTIONS – ELECTRONIC APPLICATION 2021 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 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 by email when they are certified for admission.

READ THIS INFORMATION CAREFULLY AND RETAIN IT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. All deadlines are firm and will not be extended. Other than applications and forms that are eligible for filing through the electronic application system, facsimile or email transmissions will not be accepted.

FILING DATES, DEADLINES, AND FEES:

Applications are timely filed pursuant to [SCR 40.14](#). 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.

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

1. An electronically submitted application
2. Authorization and Release form
3. Filing Fee (See fees below)

It is to your advantage to file an application 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.

May 2021 Graduates

- \$210 if application is filed by December 15, 2020
- \$410 if application is filed from December 16, 2020 until July 1, 2021.

August 2021 Graduates

- \$210 if application is filed by March 15, 2021
- \$410 if application is filed from March 16, 2021 until October 1, 2021.

December 2021 Graduates

- \$210 if application is filed by July 15, 2021.
- \$410 if application is filed from July 16, 2021 until February 1, 2022.

STEP ONE: BEGINNING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

In order for your application to be considered filed, the following three items must be received by the final filing deadline:

- (1) **Online admissions site:** By using the electronic application program, the Applicant Questionnaire will be generated. The Applicant Questionnaire is an affidavit signed electronically with your PIN. When you create your application account a PIN will be assigned to you by email. The BBE will address any omissions and misrepresentations under its character and fitness rule, [SCR 40.06](#). **You may wish to bookmark the site to more easily check the status of your application once it has been submitted.**
- (2) **Authorization and Release Form (BE-002):** Applicants must complete this form, print it, and have it notarized. Applicants will then need to scan and upload the completed, notarized form into their electronic application. The authorization and release form may be used to confirm information contained in the application and to examine law school records.
- (3) **Filing Fee:** The applicable filing fee (See the fees on Page One) must be remitted by electronic payment, or by check or money order made payable to the **Board of Bar Examiners**. Electronic payment may be made through the electronic application program and must be made at the time of submission. Electronic payment cannot be made after the submission of an application. Payment made by check or money order may be sent to the Board of Bar Examiners, P.O. Box 2748, Madison, WI 53701. If paying by check or money order, applications will not be considered filed until payment is received by the BBE. **Checks and money orders must include the applicant's name.** Checks and money orders that do not have the applicant's name on them will be returned, thereby delaying the filing of the application. **Veterans Fee Waiver:** A fee waiver exists for qualified veterans applying for admission to the Wisconsin Bar. Eligibility for this fee waiver is determined by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. Go to <http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben-FeeWaiver.asp> (external link) for more information and to apply for the eligibility code. When you receive the email with your eligibility code, upload a copy of that email with your application to have your filing fee waived.

STEP TWO: COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

All applicants must submit the following items:

- (1) **Official Transcripts:** The BBE now accepts electronic transcripts that originate directly from educational institutions that are located in the United States and from certain recognized vendors. Electronic transcripts will only be accepted directly from a U.S. education institution or from vendors approved by the Board. Electronic transcripts are to be sent to dianne.dillman@wicourts.gov . Educational institutions that do not currently issue electronic transcripts must instead mail them directly to the Board of Bar Examiners. Transcripts are required for the following:
 - a. **Undergraduate transcripts:** 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. This document may be uploaded into your electronic application at the Document Upload screen.
- (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. You are **required** to provide a valid email address for each character reference. A questionnaire will be emailed to your references after the BBE has determined that your application is filed. The email sent to character references will contain a link to a questionnaire that they must complete and submit. The questionnaire link will only work once for each reference, and the questionnaire may only be completed by the references listed in your application.

The BBE must be able to correspond with all applicants and their character and employment references by mail, phone, and email. Please verify that all contact information supplied in your application is current and accurate. In order to receive important timely email notifications from the Board of Bar Examiners, please verify that your spam filters are not blocking emails from wibbe.admissions@wicourts.gov . If you or your references experience other problems receiving emails from the Board of Bar Examiners, please contact the office at (608) 266-9760.

- (4) **Employment Verifications:** If you are legitimately unable to locate an email address for an existing or prior employer, please enter the following email address: unknown@unknown.com, **AND** then provide an explanation under the “reason you left job and sought another” section as to why you are unable to provide an email address. Please be aware that failing to include an email address for an employer may slow the application process.
- (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 driver’s record even if you do not hold a driver’s 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. To have the record sent directly to the BBE there is an option to put a mailing address under Section A-Requester Information, on the form. Please enter the BBE address in this box, use the PO Box only. For Section C, select 1a.
- (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://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/cib/cib-forms>. Use this form to request a statewide Crime Information Bureau criminal background check. There is a \$12.00 fee for the record check. Applicants should not include a postage paid envelope but should write in the “return to” space **“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) **Dean’s Certificate:** The law school will send this directly to the Board of Bar Examiners.
- (8) **Other Requested Items:** Typical items may include criminal history reports and driving abstracts from jurisdictions other than Wisconsin. Please be aware that it can take some agencies up to three months to process document requests.

All items, except military discharge certificates and reference questionnaires, must be sent by mail directly to the BBE by the issuing institution or agency. Facsimile, email, or other electronic 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, the BBE will contact applicants in writing, including by email, 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 by reviewing their electronic application file by calling the BBE office.

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. This also applies to applicants during the pendency of an appeal from an adverse determination from the Board

Applicants wishing to augment or alter entries to their application affidavit, including name changes, are advised to electronically file an Amendment to Application by logging into the electronic application file and following the steps to submit an amendment using your PIN.

Applicants who change their names for any reason during the pendency of their application must execute an Amendment to Application in the electronic application file, setting forth the former and present names, the reason for the change, and the effective date of the change. Applicants must upload any relevant documents, such as a marriage license, etc. Applicants must also update their account information through their electronic application account. Additionally, applicants still enrolled in law school need to change their names with the university and the law school.

The BBE will communicate its actions in writing to applicants at their last mailing address and/or email address provided to the BBE within the electronic application file. Mailing address, email address, and telephone number changes must be completed within the electronic application file. Select "Update Current or Future Mailing Address" and follow the steps to submit the change of address. Written, facsimile, or email transmissions are not accepted for a change of address. Changes to contact information must be made in the electronic application program.

AVOIDING DELAY IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS

It is the applicant's responsibility to check the status of his or her pending file through the electronic application system, or by contacting the BBE. 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 email and mailing 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. It is imperative that applicants use current and valid email contact information when creating their electronic filing account, and that they keep their electronic account current. The Board of Bar Examiners will communicate with applicants primarily by email and, if necessary, by U.S. Postal Service. Applicants must keep their electronic filing account and application current with any changes to email or mailing address.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Applicants are responsible for checking the status of their application through their online account. The BBE will notify all applicants by email when their files are complete and they are certified for admission. The BBE will communicate its actions via email and will send those communication's to the applicant's last email address.

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 arrange to have requested documents or proofs sent to the BBE via email or facsimile transmission from a third party.

COPIES OF APPLICATIONS

We recommend that you print a copy of your completed application for reference purposes especially since the BBE staff may need to contact you with questions about the information you provided. You will be able to access your application and any amendments made in your electronic application file until you have been admitted to practice law in Wisconsin. After you have been admitted you will no longer have access to your electronic application file. If you need a copy of your application and amendments after your admission, copies are available upon receipt of a written request and payment of \$10 for a copy or \$12 for a certified copy. Payments may be made electronically, or by check made out to Board of Bar Examiners. <https://www.wicourts.gov/services/payment/paymentbbe.htm>. If paying electronically, requests can be emailed to dianne.dillman@wicourts.gov; please include the electronic payment confirmation number.

RULES & FORMS

The following rules and forms are available online at www.wicourts.gov.

[SCR Chapter 40](#)
[SCR Chapter 40 Appendix](#)
[Online admissions site](#)