

TENNESSEE APPLICATION FOR FIRST-TIME APPLICANTS BY EXAMINATION

CHECKLIST FOR A COMPLETE FIRST-TIME EXAMINATION APPLICATION

PLEASE NOTE: This Checklist is not a substitute for reading Rule 7, the Board Policies and Procedure and the related website information.

Before reviewing this checklist, **verify that you have submitted the correct application.** A First-Time Application is used by applicants seeking admission in Tennessee by examination and:

- Are applying for admission by examination for the first time; or
- Previously applied to the Bar of Tennessee by examination less than 2 years ago but have not taken the examination in Tennessee; or
- Have previously take the examination in Tennessee but the application has expired pursuant to Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 7, Sec. 3.04(a)(8).

DEADLINES AND FILING REQUIREMENTS:

There are two deadlines for Application for Admission by Examination:

- **The Application Deadline**, which is December 1 for February exams and May 1 for July exams; and
- **The Final Deadline**, which is December 20 for February exams and May 20 for July exams.

Please see Rule 7, §§ 3.01 and 3.03 and Board Policies P-3.01 and P-3.03 for information regarding the Application and Final Deadlines.

REQUIREMENTS TO MEET THE APPLICATION DEADLINE - First-time applicants must upload the following items to their Tennessee application in Synergy **on or before the Application Deadline**:

- 1) The **NCBE application** completed online (www.ncbex.org) as the first step (i.e., before submitting the Tennessee Synergy application - see 2. below) and saved as a .pdf file, which you will use after completing step 2.
- 2) The **Tennessee Application for First Time Applicants** – completed online in [Synergy](#); once submitted, upload the NCBE .pdf file created in 1, above, to your Synergy application in the Items tab under "NCBE Application" by clicking the paper clip icon.
- 3) **Full payment of fees**, paid online by credit card after you have finalized and submitted your Tennessee application, or paid by money order or check mailed to the Board office (TBLE, 511 Union Street, Suite 525, Nashville, TN 37219). For more information on fees, click [here](#).
- 4) **Note that if you plan to request testing accommodations**, you must complete the Request for Non-Standard Testing Accommodations and upload Form 1 or the Request for Courtesy Accommodations and Form 1A by the **Application Deadline** so that the Board will have sufficient information to notify you of missing items. Again, you will have until the Final Deadline to complete the application process.

If you have not completed steps 1 – 3 above by the Application deadline, you will not be eligible to take the exam. If your online fee payment is unsuccessful as of the deadline, you will not be eligible to take the exam. Please note that **applications close at 11:59:59 PM on the day of the Application Deadline. No new applications for examination or requests for accommodations will be accepted after the Application Deadline.**

Applicants who have met the Application Deadline have until the Final Deadline to complete the application process. **Applicants may upload any of the documents required for a complete application to their Synergy account once they have submitted the application; the list is below. Applicants do not have to wait until after the Application Deadline to complete the application process by filing or causing to be filed the documents for the completed application.**

To meet the Final Deadline and complete the application process, you must have uploaded the following required items uploaded to your Synergy Application unless an item is required to be provided directly to the TBLE by a third party, in which case, the item must be mailed or uploaded by the third party so that it is received by the TBLE on or before the Final Deadline. If an applicant uploads a document that must be provided directly to the TBLE from a third party, the document will not be deemed filed. For detailed information about these documents and forms, visit www.tnble.org and select Admission by Examination, How to Apply – First Time Applicant. See also, Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 7 and Board Policies P-3.01 and P-3.03 regarding deadlines and documentation requirements.

The Board will send at least one notice of deficiency if any of the following items are missing or have been filed in the incorrect format; however, you may still have a deficiency, such as submitting the incorrect application, for which you will not receive notice prior to the Final Deadline, or by failing to complete the NCBE application process, as described below.

REQUIREMENTS TO COMPLETE THE APPLICATION PROCESS: The following items are required to complete your application and must be either **received from a third party, where required, by the TBLE, or uploaded by the applicant to the applicant's Synergy application on or before the Final Deadline:**

- 1) **COMPLETION OF THE NCBE APPLICATION PROCESS** (required every 2 years): You must finalize/submit the online NCBE application (a .pdf of the application would have been uploaded with the Tennessee Application on or before the Application Deadline), pay all NCBE fees, and provide in the format and by the process required by the NCBE all required documents; to see your application status and steps left to complete, you will need to check your NCBE Dashboard. Applicants are responsible for managing their NCBE dashboard as the Board does not have access to and will not provide notice regarding steps needed to complete the NCBE application process prior to the Final Deadline. If the Board has not received your completed NCBE Investigative Report and your name is not on the report sent by the NCBE after the Final Deadline or the status of your NCBE application is “pending” or “hold,” you will NOT BE ELIGIBLE TO SIT FOR THE EXAMINATION;
- 2) **UNDERGRADUATE TRANSCRIPTS** (required for first-time applications) for degrees earned (Bachelor's Degree or higher) mailed or emailed directly from the school or transcript service to the TBLE - ELECTRONIC TRANSCRIPTS MUST BE SENT TO BLE.ADMINISTRATOR@TNCOURTS.GOV;
- 3) The completed [LAW DEGREE VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATE OF DEAN OF LAW SCHOOL FORM](#) (required for first-time applications) from every law school attended and, if applicable, the disclosure form from Non-ABA approved law school*, other than a Tennessee law school approved by the Board. Required forms, including forms for foreign law schools, are available [here](#). YOUR LAW SCHOOL(S) MAY REQUEST A LINK FOR SECURE UPLOAD OF THE FORM BY EMAILING BLE.ADMINISTRATOR@TNCOURTS.GOV; the form **must come directly from your law school** either by upload using the secure link provided by the TBLE directly to the law school, or by mail directly from your law school to the TBLE, so that they are **received by the Final Deadline**; forms emailed to the TBLE or uploaded by the applicant are NOT ACCEPTED and will not be considered as part of a timely complete application;
- 4) Applicant's **CURRENT RESUME** (required each exam) in .pdf format only;

- 5) A **CURRENT, COLOR PHOTO** (required each exam), similar to a photo submitted with a passport application, looking straight into the camera (face forward) and that includes your head, full face, and shoulders against a light background, in **.jpg file format only** (see [FAQs](#) for more info regarding picture size and requirements);
- 6) An unexpired **GOVERNMENT-ISSUED “REAL” PHOTO ID** (required each exam), such as a driver’s license, military ID, or passport (copy the page with your picture), but not a school ID, in **.pdf or .jpg file format**; an
- 7) **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE GENERAL INSTRUCTION MANUAL** for the current exam, available on the Board’s website, [here](#), signed after reading the Manual but before the Final Deadline and saved in **.pdf format only**.

OTHER DOCUMENTS THAT, IF REQUIRED, MUST BE SUBMITTED ON OR BEFORE THE FINAL DEADLINE:

- 8) **APPLICANTS SEEKING NON-STANDARD TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS** and who met the Application Deadline for the Request for Non-Standard Testing Accommodations or Courtesy Accommodations, all required [forms](#) (in folder labeled, "AA Non-Standard Testing Accommodations Forms,"), which includes requirements for reports **from Qualified Professionals and other testing agencies as noted on Forms 2, 3, and 4**; the forms must be **received by the TBLE on or before the Final Deadline**. Qualified Professionals and schools or agencies completing Forms 3 and 4 may email BLE.Administrator@tncourts.gov to obtain the secure upload link.
- 9) **APPLICANTS WHO ATTENDED A NON-ABA-ACCREDITED LAW SCHOOL LOCATED IN THE UNITED STATES BUT NOT IN TENNESSEE:**
 - (a) Proof of licensing by examination in the jurisdiction in which the law school was located, in the form of a score transfer report or a letter from the jurisdiction in which the applicant sat for the examination;
 - (b) Information sufficient for the Board to determine that the applicant’s law school curriculum is equivalent to a three-year course of study that is substantially equivalent to the legal education provided by approved law schools located in Tennessee; the curriculum shall not include distance, online or other than in-person learning beyond that permitted under Rule 7, section 2.02(e) for ABA-accredited law schools as provided in Definitions 7 and 8 and Standards 306, 311, and 511 of the Standard and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools; and
 - (c) An [Affidavit of Past Practice](#). See also Rule 7, section 5.01(c) and Policy P-5.01(c).
- 10) **APPLICANTS WHO RECEIVED THEIR LEGAL EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES** and do not have a J.D. from an ABA-accredited or Tennessee-approved law school must provide the following (some requirements must be completed each exam):
 - (a) The completed [“Foreign-Education Option Election” form](#);
 - (b) An equivalency evaluation, as provided in Rule 7, section 7.01(c) and Policy P-7.01 (the “Foreign Education Report”);
 - (c) If seeking admission under:
 - (i) Rule 7, Section 7.01(b)(1), based on admission in another jurisdiction and time in practice, a completed [Affidavit of Practice in a Foreign Country](#) if licensed outside the United states, or a completed [Affidavit of Past Practice](#) if licensed in the United States.

- NOTE: If applicant is licensed in both a foreign jurisdiction and a U.S. jurisdiction, applicant must provide both forms detailing applicant's practice in each jurisdiction; time in practice in the U.S. in a jurisdiction that permits such practice without a license or registration as a Foreign Legal Consultant should be documented on an Affidavit of Past Practice and include documentation that supports the claim that the practice in that jurisdiction was permitted.

(ii) Rule 7, Section 7.01(b)(2), based on foreign legal education and a U.S. LL. M., the [Foreign Education Legal Studies in the United States](#) form, completed and signed by the Law School Dean or designee;

(d) For all applicants with foreign legal education, the completed “[Non-US Law Degree Verification and Dean's Certification](#)” form; and

(e) The documents listed in paragraph (11) and (12) below, if applicable.

(f) Documents not in English: If the responses are not in English, a translation to English by a certified translator must be provided with the original document.

(g) See Rule 7, Section 7.01, Policy P-3.03, and P-7.01, all found [here](#);

11) **APPLICANTS WHO ARE LICENSED IN ANOTHER U.S. JURISDICTION:** You must provide the following:

- (a) **Certification of admission** to the highest court of each state in which you are licensed (required to be uploaded to Synergy every two years, unless a change in status prior to that time, in .pdf file format only); and
- (b) **Certification from the disciplinary authority** of each state in which you are licensed attesting to your current standing and disciplinary history (required to be uploaded to Synergy every two years, unless a change in status prior to that time, in .pdf file format only).
- (c) The certification may take the form of one certificate or two, but **must show the date of admission** to the highest court and **certify your current standing (disciplinary and administrative, with disciplinary history)** with the bar of the state(s) in which you are licensed.

12) **APPLICANTS LICENSED IN A FOREIGN JURISDICTION:** An applicant licensed in a non-U.S. jurisdiction must provide the following:

- (a) Three letters from attorneys or judges verifying applicant's license in a foreign country:
 - (i) The letters must attest to applicant's practice in that country and must relate to applicant's work with the recommender in the practice of law and, if from a relative, the relationship must be disclosed in the letter;
 - (ii) Letters from an Applicant's parents, grandparents, siblings or spouse who are practicing attorneys are not permitted.
- (b) A certified copy of the record of license of the court or agency which admitted the applicant to the practice of law in such country.
- (c) Documents not in English: For documents that are not in English, a translation to English by a certified translator must be provided with the original document.

13) **APPLICANTS WHO DID NOT GRADUATE FROM AN ACCREDITED UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOL OR WHO HAVE A FOREIGN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE** and who earned a J.D. from an ABA or

Tennessee-approved law school must submit a petition for waiver of the accreditation requirement pursuant to Rule 7, section 2.01(c), and Policy P-2.01.

- 14) **APPLICANTS WHO HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL FIVE (5) OR MORE TIME ON THE FORMER TENNESSEE BAR EXAMINATION OR THE UBE IN ANY JURISDICTION:** Any applicant who has not achieved a score sufficient for admission in Tennessee after five or more attempts on the former Tennessee bar examination or on the UBE in any jurisdiction has additional requirements that must be included with the bar exam application. See Board Policy P-4.05 for the information on the petition and supporting documentation that must be provided as part of your application and prior to the Final Deadline.

For detailed information about these documents and forms, visit www.tnble.org and select Admission by Examination, How to Apply – First-Time Application. **Click here to access [FORMS](#)** for Admission by Examination and for Non-Standard Testing Accommodations.

REMINDERS AND NOTICES:

- Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all documents are submitted in the correct format on or before the Final Deadline.
- Applicants who are provided notice of a deficiency must correct the deficiency on or before the Final Deadline.
- The Board is not authorized to extend or modify deadlines for filing. See Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 7, § 12.12.