TENNESSEE APPLICATION FOR FIRST-TIME APPLICANT 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 taken the examination in Tennessee but the application has expired pursuant to Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 7, Sec. 3.07(a)(8).

DEADLINES AND FILING REQUIREMENTS:

The filing period for an Application for Admission by Examination – First Time opens on October 1 for a February exam and March 1 for a July exam. The **FINAL DEADLINE** for an Application for Admission by Examination – First Time and all required documents is December 1 for a February exam and May 1 for a July exam. All applications close on the Final Deadline. **These dates may be changed by the Court for a specific exam period so please check the website at www.tnble.org for any changes or updated.**

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

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

(1) The NCBE character and fitness application for the current examination, completed online at **https://www.ncbex.org**, and submitted to the NCBE with all attachments uploaded to the NCBE portal, no sooner than 6 months prior to the date of the examination, saved as a .pdf document with the attachments and uploaded to the Synergy application.

(a) To complete the Synergy application, an Applicant must have completed the NCBE character and fitness application in the NCBE online application system in order to provide the Board the information needed for the Tennessee Synergy

application and to determine what other documents are required as part of the complete application; the "application number" at the foot of the application must be included in the Tennessee Synergy Application.

(b) Save the NCBE application as a .pdf, to upload to the Tennessee Application in Synergy (see ¶ 3, below) on or before the Final Deadline; the application and investigation are good for two years from the date of the application.

(c) **All steps on the NCBE checklist,** including but not limited to payment of the NCBE fee, upload of application attachments to the NCBE and to the Tennessee Application in Synergy, proper submission to the NCBE of the Authorization and Release forms, and any other requirement listed on your NCBE checklist, **must be completed before the Final Deadline**;

(2) The Tennessee Application in Synergy found at **www.synergy.tnble.com** (the correct application must be submitted each time the applicant applies);

(3) Full payment of the filing fee for the Tennessee Synergy Application as required by section 11.01 (required each exam). Once the Tennessee Application is submitted and paid, upload the .pdf of the NCBE application (see ¶ 1, above). The Fee Schedule can be found at **https://tnble.org/rules-policies/.**

(4) **Requests for Non-Standard or Courtesy Testing Accommodations.** An applicant who is requesting non-standard testing or courtesy accommodations must submit the separate Request for Non-Standard Testing Accommodations or the Request for Courtesy Accommodations in Synergy **on or before the Final Deadline.** In addition to submitting the Request for Accommodations, the applicant must upload or cause to have sent to the Board by the appropriate party the applicable Non-Standard Testing Forms 2, 3, and 4, so that they are received by the Board on or before the Final Deadline. *See* Policy P-3.11.

(a) Required forms that must be provided to the Board by a third party **must be received by the Board directly from the third party with the required attachments on or before the Final Deadline**.

(b) The Board offers a secure upload link to third party professionals completing the form and instructions for obtaining the link are on the Forms.

(c) If the Board has not received the required form and required attachments from the Qualified Professional on or before the Final Deadline, the Request for Accommodations will be denied.

For detailed information about these documents and forms, visit **https://tnble.org/bar-exam/**. **Click here to access FORMS** for Admission by Examination and for Non-Standard Testing Accommodations.

(5) Proof of United States citizenship or status as a qualified alien as provided Board Policy P-1.03 (.pdf format only; required each exam);

(6) Undergraduate Transcripts mailed directly from the school or transcript service to the Board or provided electronically to the Board directly from the school or transcript service (required for first-time examination applications only);

(7) Law Degree Verification, on the authorized form, completed and signed by the law school Dean or designee from each law school attended by an applicant, even if no degree was awarded, mailed directly from the law school to the Board, or provided electronically directly from the law school according to the process designated by the Board (required for first-time examination applications only);

(8) Current Resume uploaded to Synergy (.pdf format only; required each exam);

(9) A color photo similar to that used for a passport uploaded to Synergy in .jpg format only; see Board Policy P-3.01 (required each exam);

(10) A color image of applicant's unexpired, official government-issued REAL ID such as a driver's license, military ID, or passport, uploaded to Synergy in .jpg or .pdf format; for more information on REAL ID requirements, see the Tennessee Department of Safety & Homeland Security's REAL ID page (required each exam);

(11) Acknowledgment of Receipt of General Instruction Manual for current exam, available on the Board's website, signed, saved in .pdf format, and uploaded to Synergy (required each exam);

(12) For 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 (required each exam unless otherwise noted):

(a) The completed "Foreign-Education Option Election" form (.pdf format only);

(b) An equivalency evaluation, as provided in section 7.01(c) and Policy P-7.01, sent to the Board by the evaluator (required first-time examination application unless additional degrees are earned after a prior application);

(c) If seeking admission in Tennessee based on admission in another jurisdiction and time in practice under section 7.01(b)(1), 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 (either or both in .pdf format only). 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 United States 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; time in practice must comply with the requirements of section 5.01(c);

(d) If seeking admission based on foreign legal education and a LL. M. earned in the United States at an accredited U.S. law school, Certification of Dean of Legal Studies in the United States, completed and signed by the law school Dean or designee (required first-time examination application only);

(e) For all applicants with foreign legal education, the completed "Law Degree from Outside the United States" form (required first-time examination application only); and

(f) The documents listed in paragraph (12) and (13) below, if applicable.

(g) 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 (.pdf format only).

(13) For applicants licensed in another U.S. jurisdiction, certificates of admission to the highest court of the jurisdiction and certificates of current good standing with disciplinary history for each jurisdiction in which applicant has been admitted (.pdf format only; required for first-time examination application, then every 2 years or whenever there is a change in status);

(14) For applicants licensed in a foreign jurisdiction, three letters from attorneys in each country in which applicant is licensed who can verify that applicant is licensed and attest to applicant's practice in that country (.pdf format only; required for first-time examination application, then every 2 years or whenever there is a change in status); requirements for the letters are as follows:

(a) The three letters from attorneys or judges must verify the applicant's license in a foreign country and attest to applicant's practice in that country;

(b) The recommendation must relate to the applicant's work with the recommender in the practice of law and, if from a relative, the relationship must be disclosed in the letter;

(c) Letters from an applicant's parents, grandparents, siblings or spouse who are practicing attorneys are not permitted; and

(d) 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.

(15) For applicants who graduated from a law school outside of Tennessee that at the time of applicant's graduation, met the requirements of Rule 7, § 2.02(d) but was not accredited by an Approved Accreditor:

(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 (.pdf format only; first-time examination applications only); and

(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 section 2.02(e)(3), for accredited law schools (.pdf format only; first-time examination applications only);

(c) For applicants who have earned a J.D. from a law school accredited by an Approved Accreditor or Tennessee-approved law school and who either did not graduate from an accredited undergraduate school as required in section 2.01, or have a foreign undergraduate degree, a request for waiver of the accreditation requirement pursuant to section 2.01(c), and Policy P-2.01 (.pdf format only; first-time examination applications only); note for applicants who have a foreign undergraduate degree, an equivalency evaluation, as provided in section 7.01(c) and Policy P-7.01, received by the Board directly from the evaluator (required first-time examination application unless additional degrees are earned after a prior application); and

(16) For applicants who have been unsuccessful on the UBE, whether the Legacy UBE or the NextGen UBE, in Tennessee or any other jurisdiction administering the UBE, five (5) or more times, the petition and documentation required under Policy P-4.05 (.pdf format only; every examination after 5th attempt).

The Board offers a secure upload link to third party professionals completing the form and instructions for obtaining the link are on the Forms.

To meet the Final Deadline and complete the application process, an applicant must upload the required items to the applicant's 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 using the secure upload link provided by the Board 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. Documents MUST be provided in the proper format, as noted above and in Policy P-3.01.

For detailed information about required documents and forms, visit **https://tnble.org/first-time-bar-exam/.** See also, Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 7 and Board Policies P-3.01 and P-3.03 regarding the Final Deadline and documentation requirements.

An applicant who submits an application and pays the fee on or before April 1 for the July examination or November 1 for the February exam and uploads the .pdf copy of the completed NCBE application will receive at least one notice prior to the Final Deadline of any documents that must be submitted to the Board that are either missing, non-conforming, or incorrectly submitted in order to provide the applicant an opportunity to correct any deficiencies, provided, however, that:

- The TBLE does not provide notice if an applicant submits the incorrect application and, therefore, may have a deficiency at the Final Deadline.
- An applicant who amends the NCBE application before the Final Deadline without notice to the Board will not receive notice of missing items related to answers that were disclosed in the amendment(s) to NCBE application, and may be found ineligible to sit for the examination.
- The Board will not know of deficiencies in the NCBE application process until after the Final Deadline. Applicants are responsible for monitoring their NCBE Dashboard to track the progress of their NCBE application and any missing items.

An applicant who has not completed the steps above by the Final Deadline will not be eligible to take the exam.

An applicant whose online fee payment is unsuccessful as of the Final Deadline will not be eligible to take the exam.

Please note that applications close at 11:59:59 PM on the day of the Final Deadline (or the following business day if the deadline is on a weekend or holiday). No new applications for examination or requests for accommodations (see below) will be accepted after the Final Deadline.

DEADLINES ARE STRICTLY OBSERVED AND ENFORCED. THE BOARD DOES NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO WAIVE THE FINAL DEADLINE.

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.

Documentation requirements for compliance with Rule 7, § 1.03 and Policy P-1.03:

(a) All applicants, whether seeking admission by examination under section 3.01, by transferred UBE score under section 3.05, without examination under section 5.01, as a military servicemember or spouse of a military servicemember under section 10.06, or registration as in-house counsel or a foreign legal consultant under section 10.01, are required to provide to the Board with the application for admission to practice law in Tennessee proof of the attorney's United States citizenship or status as a qualified alien as follows:

(1) Proof or United States citizenship shall consist of the applicant's United States Passport, a certified copy of the applicant's birth certificate, a copy of the certificate of naturalization (Form N-550 or N-570) or certificate of citizenship (N-560 or N-561), or the naturalization certificate number.

(2) Proof of status as a qualified alien within the meeting of Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-58-102(3) shall provide at least one (1) but preferably two (2) of the following unexpired documents unless noted otherwise:

(A) Alien Number (A-number)/USCIS Number, a receipt number on an I-797 Notice of Action form, or a SEVIS ID number;

(B) Permanent Resident Card (Green Card) - Form I-551 which can include Form N-400 - Application for Naturalization; Form I-75 - Petition to Remove Conditions on Residence or Form I-829 – Petition by Investor to Remove Condition on Permanent Resident Status showing extension of otherwise expired Green Card;

(C) Form I-797 Notice of Action, including Forms I-797 A-F;

(D) Foreign Passport with Temporary I-551 – Machine Readable Immigrant Visa that has been endorsed and has not expired;

(E) Foreign Passport with Temporary I-551 – Permanent Resident Stamp

(F) Form I-94 – Arrival/Departure Record in either electronic or paper format and including the CBP Global Entry From I-94 and the paper form in Form I-797A;

(G) Form I-327 – Permit to Re-Enter Travel Document;

(H) Form I-571 – Refugee Travel Document;

(I) Form I-766 – Employment Authorization Document (EAD) and, if expired, documentation showing that the validity period was automatically extended by DHS; or the EAD and Form I797 receipt notice for an EAD renewal that includes language extending the validity period of the EAD;

(J) An unexpired Foreign Passport with an immigration stamp that has not expired;

(K) Form I-20 – Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status for Academic and Language Students or for Vocational Students that has not expired;

(L) Form DS-2019 – Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status; and

(M) Form I-385 – Alien Booking Record that includes a parole stamp endorsed by a Customs and Border Protection or U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer or a parole notation.

(b) Forms I-220A, Form I-220B, and Form I-862 are not an identity documents and are not evidence of having an immigration status.

(c) Applicants seeking admission by examination who do not provide proof of citizenship or status as a qualified alien by the Final Deadline as defined in section 3.03 are not eligible to take the examination.