

## **Instructions for First-Time Application for Admission by Examination (Special 2.19)**

Special February 2019 Applications for first time applicants can be filed beginning January 25 through February 6, 2019 by those who applied to sit for the February 2019 District of Columbia bar examination. The Tennessee Special February 2019 Application is an application for admission to the bar of Tennessee. Your UBE score will not be reported directly to the District of Columbia and you will be subject to the rules, policies and processes for admission in Tennessee. In order to pass the bar in Tennessee, you must earn at least a 270 on the UBE and must meet the character and fitness standards for admission in Tennessee. \*

All documents listed in Board Policy P-3.01(a)(2) – (10) must be **received by** the Tennessee Board of Law Examiners (TBLE or Board) in the proper format on or before the noted deadline in order to be eligible to sit for the examination. Details regarding the documents required for a complete application are listed in the step-by-step instructions below. **If more than 70 applications are received, the first 70 submitted and paid on or before February 6, 2019, will be accepted and the others will be returned and the fee refunded as soon as possible after the deadline.**

As an applicant to the Bar of Tennessee, you are responsible for ensuring that all documents are submitted to the TBLE in a timely manner, even if the documents are coming from a third party. You may be notified by the TBLE, time permitting, that there is a deficiency in your file. **Documents must be received on or before the deadline or you will not be eligible to sit for the bar examination.** Notice of a deficiency does not entitle the Applicant to an extension of time to submit the required documentation. Neither the application nor the fees are transferable if you fail to complete your application prior to the deadline.

The process for submitting an application for admission by examination includes completion of an NCBE Application for Background Investigation and the Tennessee online application found at [synergy.tnble.com](http://synergy.tnble.com). You must finalize and submit your Synergy application before you make payment. We cannot accept payment without a Synergy application. Hard copies of applications are not accepted. Applications for Admission by Examination are governed by Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 7, Sections 3.01 and 3.03 and Board Policy P-3.01 and P-3.03.

### **STEPS TO TAKE TO COMPLETE YOUR APPLICATION**

#### STEP 1

Read and familiarize yourself with [Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 7](#) and the [Board Policies and Procedures](#), found on the same page as these instructions or by clicking the highlighted text.

## STEP 2

Go to [www.ncbex.org](http://www.ncbex.org) and create a secure NCBE number account. The NCBE number is required on all forms completed for the NCBE and the TBLE application process.

## STEP 3

Go to [www.ncbex.org](http://www.ncbex.org) and complete the online NCBE application for background investigation, selecting TENNESSEE. Select Supplemental Application if you have a completed NCBE background investigation from another jurisdiction or First Time Application if you just submitted your first investigation request to the NCBE for the D.C. Bar. **Do not pay for this application by credit card; rather select the “pay by check “ option as the NCBE has not determined what fee will be due for your application to Tennessee with your D.C. investigation pending. They will notify you of the fee amount when it is determined.** When you have completed the NCBE application form on-line, save the application and all attachments as a .pdf file. Submit the materials, including the signed and notarized release forms, and payment to the NCBE as required in the NCBE instructions.

**Note:** The NCBE application and all attachments must be submitted to the NCBE and a .pdf uploaded to your Synergy Application on or before the February 6, 2019 Deadline. You will upload the saved .pdf file to your Synergy Application as provided in Step 5, below.

**Note for Applicants who previously applied as a First Time applicant but did not sit for the examination:** Please see [Re-Examination\(Special\)/How To Apply](#) for information regarding expiration of documents required for a complete application and which documents need to be submitted each examination.

**FAILURE TO PROVIDE COMPLETE INFORMATION MAY RESULT IN DENIAL OF YOUR APPLICATION. A DUTY OF CANDOR APPLIES (Rule 7, Sec. 3.08).**

**Expunged matters:** A matter that has been **expunged** MUST be disclosed unless it is a matter that was resolved as a juvenile. See generally State v. Schindler, 986 S.W.2d 209 (Tenn. 1999), Wright v. Tennessee Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission, 277 S.W.3d 1 (Tenn. 2008).

**Important Note:** The NCBE and the Tennessee Board of Law Examiners are separate entities. The NCBE conducts background investigations for the TBLE. Submitting documents only to the TBLE or only to the NCBE will not meet the filing requirements and will not constitute a complete application. You MUST submit your application to the NCBE and upload a .pdf of your complete NCBE application to your Tennessee Synergy Application (see Step 4). You may be deemed ineligible to sit for the exam and your licensing will be delayed if you submit the application only to the NCBE or only to the TBLE.

## STEP 4

A link to the Tennessee application portal can be found in the upper right corner of this page. Click on the [Synergy](#) tab and complete the new user registration and submit. Upon completion of your Synergy registration, you will receive an email to confirm your registration; check your spam if you do not receive the email and be sure to add "@tncourts.gov" to your trusted senders. Once you have completed the confirmation, you may log in to Synergy from the website or by clicking [here](#). From the dashboard select "Application for First Time Examination (Special)." You will have a chance to review your answers before you "submit and finalize" the application. Be sure to read and answer each question fully. Failure to provide complete information may result in denial of your application. A duty of candor applies (Rule 7, Sec. 3.08).

**Note:** Applicants for admission by examination who are not licensed and/or are not in good standing in another U.S. jurisdiction must appear for an in person interview, which will be scheduled up to six weeks after the bar examination. Applicants who are licensed and in good standing in another jurisdiction may, in the discretion of the Board, be required to appear for an in person interview.

#### STEP 5

Once you have finalized the Synergy online application, return to the Dashboard and click the "details" link next to the application (looks like a magnifying glass). From that screen, you will upload the required documents listed below in .pdf format unless otherwise noted. *Certain third party forms must be sent directly from the third party to the TBLE, as noted below.* An application for admission by examination consists of the following items:

- a. Application for first time applicants – completed online at synergy.tnble.com by February 6, 2019;
- b. a .pdf file of the NCBE application completed online and any required attachments created in STEP 3, above by **February 6, 2019**;
- c. a current, color passport photo in .jpg file format only (see FAQs for more info) by **February 6, 2019**;
- d. your current resume in .pdf from only by **February 6, 2019**;
- e. proof that you applied to the February 2019 D.C. bar examination in the form of an application confirmation letter or a receipt for application fees paid to the D.C. Committee on Admissions by **February 6, 2019**;
- f. undergraduate transcripts for degrees earned (Bachelor's or above) mailed directly from the school or transcript service to the TBLE (see additional information below including petition requirement for undergraduate degree from non-SACS approved\* schools) by **February 19, 2019**;

g. completed Law Degree Verification and Certificate of Dean of Law School form from every law school attended; disclosure form from Non-ABA approved law school\*, other than Tennessee law schools approved by the Board (mailed directly from the law school to the TBLE office, see additional information below) REQUIRED FORMS ARE AVAILABLE [HERE](#) at the bottom of the page by **February 19, 2019**;

h. if you are licensed in another U.S. jurisdiction\*, certificates of admission and of good standing for each jurisdiction in which you have been admitted (.pdf format only) – some states use one form for both but certification of admission to the highest court and of current good standing before the Bar are both required for admission (see below for more information) by **February 6, 2019**;

i. if you received your legal education outside the United States\*, District of Columbia or U.S. territories, an equivalency evaluation and/or completed Certification of Dean of Legal Studies in the U.S. form and Affidavit of Practice in Foreign Country, and letters from three attorneys in each country in which you are licensed who can verify that you are licensed and attest to your practice in that country; see Rule 7, Section 7.01 and Policy P-3.05 and P-7.01, all found [here](#) by **February 6, 2019**;

j. if you attended a law school outside of Tennessee\* that was not an ABA-accredited law school at the time of your graduation, proof of licensing in the jurisdiction in which the law school was located and an Affidavit of Past Practice by **February 6, 2019**; and

k. full payment of fees by **February 6, 2019**.

#### STEP 6

Submit the \$575 application filing fee; if CHECK OR MONEY ORDER, it should be made payable to TN Board of Law Examiners and mailed to the Board of Law Examiners, 511 Union Street, Suite 525, Nashville, TN 37219. Please be sure to clearly mark your full name and NCBE number on the check.

**DEADLINES AND ELIGIBILITY TO SIT FOR THE EXAMINATION:** All of the documents listed in STEP 5, including any additional documents required for those licensed in another jurisdiction\*, educated at a non-accredited U.S. institution\*, or educated in a foreign country\*, must be **received by** the deadline noted in order to be eligible to sit for the examination and upon Board approval. Please note that all deadlines are **“received by” deadlines**, not “postmarked by” deadlines and the TBLE Office is open from 8:00 until 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, other than recognized state holidays. Items from third-parties must be sent directly from the third party to the Board and must arrive prior to the time the office closes to meet the deadline. Pursuant to Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 7, Sections 3.10 and 11.02, neither the Executive Director nor the Board has the discretion to waive or extend the dates for filing applications nor may any fees be waived. Applicants may receive a notice of missing documents or deficiencies but such notice does not constitute grounds for any extension of the final deadline. You may begin your application at any time during the application period and upload documents as you receive them prior to the deadline. Applications will be considered

on a first come, first served basis for the 70 available seats. The responsibility for ensuring timely completion of the application is on the applicant. The Board will deny an application if any item is missing, regardless of when it was requested by the applicant.

**OTHER INFORMATION: TRANSCRIPTS, FORMS AND ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS can be found [here](#).**

**MPRE Requirements:** First time applicants to the Tennessee bar must achieve a score of 82 or higher within 2 years of successfully completing the Tennessee bar examination in order to be eligible for admission. An MPRE score is valid for admission if it was earned within two years of successful completion of the bar examination or UBE score transfer application date, except as provided below. For example, an MPRE score of 82 or higher from the August 2017 MPRE administration will be valid through the July 2019 bar examination administration.

**Applicants Licensed in Another Jurisdiction:** Applicants who are licensed, active and in good standing in another U.S. jurisdiction and who are using an expired MPRE score pursuant to Rule 7, Section 4.07(d) must provide proof of an MPRE score of 82 or higher, whether applying for the first time or for re-examination.

**Requests for Testing Accommodations:** If you require non-standard testing (NST) accommodations, please complete the Emergency Request for Non-Standard Testing Accommodations application online and provide all of the required NST forms on or before the **February 6, 2019**, deadline. The Emergency Request for Non-Standard Testing Accommodation is in addition to the requirements for the Application for Admission by Examination and the same deadline applies. To see complete instructions for NST, click [here](#). Non-standard testing applications require a comprehensive report from your treating professional and, in most cases, professional diagnostic test results. Please familiarize yourself with the Board's Non-Standard Testing Accommodations Policy that can be found under the link for Non-Standard Testing and under Governing Authorities. ***A Request for Emergency Non-Standard Testing Accommodation must be submitted if you have a medical need for medication, food, water, glucose testing supplies, equipment or other non-standard items at the exam table.***

**Laptop Testing:** You will receive an email from ExamSoft, the exam Software provider, regarding the laptop testing registration procedure. Included in the email will be details regarding the deadline for registering to use your laptop for the essay testing portion of the exam. If you wish to handwrite the exam, do not respond to the email and do not download the Software. By registering and downloading the Software, you agree that you have read, understood and accepted the General Information, Instructions and Release of Liability in "Laptop Testing" [here](#) or click the link to Laptop Testing in the navigation tabs to the left. If you fail to register and download the software, you will be handwriting the examination.

**SPECIAL NOTES FOR ALL APPLICANTS:**

**NO TRANSFERRED MBE SCORES:** Tennessee does not accept MBE scores transferred from previous Tennessee exams or from another jurisdiction, whether or not concurrent. All applicants sit for the entire examination and only scores earned in a single administration will be considered.

**SCORE EXPIRATIONS:** Exam scores are valid for admission for three years from the date of grade release. You must complete all requirements for admission within that time or your scores expire.

**SUPERVISED PRACTICE AND PRACTICE PENDING ADMISSION:** For information on practice prior to admission pursuant to Rule 7, Sections 5.01 (g) or 10.04, click [here](#).

**AMENDMENTS TO APPLICATION:** If you have previously submitted an application for admission to the Tennessee bar, regardless of type of application, and you have supplemental, new or different information to report, please print and complete the application amendment form (see files below). Once completed, save the form as a .pdf file and upload to your Synergy application under 'Applicant Additional Documentation'. You may change your personal address and phone number in [Synergy](#) in your system profile (My Profile Page). To change your email address, please email [BLE.administrator@tncourts.gov](mailto:BLE.administrator@tncourts.gov) requesting the change. Please note that if your NCBE application is still pending you are required to amend your application with the NCBE as well. Visit [www.ncbex.org](http://www.ncbex.org) for amendment requirements.