



Board of Law Examiners
Appointed by the Supreme Court of Texas

**A MESSAGE FROM THE TEXAS BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS TO
PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS FOR ADMISSION TO THE BAR OF TEXAS**

This is to advise you of certain procedures and requirements that will apply to you if you are admitted to an ABA-approved law school in Texas and intend to become licensed to practice law in Texas upon your graduation from that law school.

The *Rules Governing Admission to the Bar of Texas* ("Rules") provide that a law student attending an ABA-approved law school in Texas who intends to apply for admission to the Bar of Texas must complete and file a form entitled the *Declaration of Intention to Study Law* ("Declaration"). The timely filing deadline for the Declaration is October 1 for students entering law school in the Fall term, May 1 for semester hour Spring entrants, June 1 for quarter hour Spring entrants, and September 15 for Summer entrants. You may not file the Declaration until you have started law school. However, these deadlines occur within a few weeks of the beginning of your first year of law school, so it is important to consider them now while you are planning for law school admission.

The Declaration makes a number of inquiries of the law student completing the form, including inquiries into criminal offenses and discipline received as a student. You should carefully review this form and the questions it contains on the website of the Texas Board of Law Examiners www.ble.state.tx.us.

Each law student who files a Declaration is also required to submit to the Board a copy of his or her law school application. **The staff of the Board will compare the responses given on the law school application to the responses given on the Declaration**, with particular emphasis on the questions relating to criminal offenses and discipline received as a student. Please note that the questions asked on the law school application may not be identical to the questions asked on the Declaration.

Careful attention must be given to the responses you make on your law school application. The law schools to which you apply and the Texas Board of Law Examiners expect your responses to be truthful and complete. **When in doubt, disclose.** You will be required to submit an FBI fingerprint card to the Board with your Declaration. The Board will obtain your criminal history information from both the FBI and the Texas Department of Public Safety. You will also be required to submit authorization and release forms with your Declaration. These forms will accompany requests by the Board to verify your academic, military, employment, and other relevant records. You will be required to amend your law school application if it appears to Board staff that you should have revealed a matter on your law school application, but did not, or if what you revealed to your law school appears false or misleading in light of the information obtained by Board staff.

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It will be to your advantage to file your Declaration by the applicable deadlines given above. **This is particularly true if you have significant matters to reveal.** The staff of the Board is able to assist and counsel law students in the resolution of many issues during the time the students are in law school; however, students must file the Declaration on time to enable the Board staff to provide such assistance. Additionally, if you file your Declaration late, it may result in the delay of your licensure.

The Rules require that an applicant for admission to the Bar of Texas be of present good moral character and fitness. The Declaration provides the basis of the staff's investigation into a Texas law student's present moral character and fitness.

A law student whose investigation reveals a significant character or fitness issue may be required to appear before a Panel of the Board of Law Examiners for a character and fitness hearing. Examples of the kinds of issues that may require a hearing include, but are not limited to:

Dishonesty, including non-disclosure of information requested by a law school or the Board;
Felony criminal history (see Rule IV on the Board's website for more information about felonies);
Significant misdemeanor criminal history;
Chemical dependency; and
Failure to discharge significant financial obligations, including:

- Payment of child-support;
- Filing federal income tax returns and payment of required taxes;
- Failure, in an employment setting, to file withholding taxes for employees; and
- Default in a substantial amount of business or personal debts.

After having read and considered this message, we encourage you to contact Board staff at 512-463-1621 if you need assistance in completing your Declaration or if you have questions about the licensure process. You may also need to contact the admissions officials at your law school if you have concerns about your law school application.