



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION OF MORAL CHARACTER

**Please read these instructions carefully.** You are required to be aware of and comply with all instructions that follow. Online submission of applications is preferred. You may submit the application in hard copy upon request. If submitted in hard copy, the completed application must be typewritten or legibly printed in ink.

You may only submit an Application for Determination of Moral Character (Determination Application) after you have registered with the State Bar as a law student or attorney applicant. (Rules of State Bar, rule 4.16(B).) The registration application may be completed through the [Applicant Portal](#).

Determination Applications generally will be processed in a minimum of 180 days, or 6 months, after the application is deemed complete and filed. The process may take longer if issues arise that require further investigation and review by the State Bar.

You are encouraged to file a Determination Application before the start of your last year of law study. Failure to timely file an application could delay your admission to practice.

Please consider the following when answering the questions on the Determination Application, as applications are processed in accordance with Title 4, Division 1 of the Rules of the State Bar (Admissions Rules). Current Admissions Rules are available on the State Bar [website](#) or upon request from the Office of Admissions.

Rule 4.40 of the Admissions Rules states:

- (A) An applicant must be of good moral character as determined by the State Bar. The applicant has the burden of establishing that they are of good moral character.
- (B) “Good moral character” includes but is not limited to qualities of honesty, fairness, candor, trustworthiness, observance of fiduciary responsibility, respect for and obedience to the law, and respect for the rights of others and the judicial process.

Rule 4.41(C) of the Admissions Rules states:

An attorney who is suspended for disciplinary reasons or disbarred, has resigned with disciplinary charges pending, or is otherwise not in good standing for disciplinary reasons in any jurisdiction may not submit an application.

Rule 4.42 of the Admissions Rules states:

Until an applicant has taken the attorney's oath, an applicant has a continuing duty to promptly notify the Office of Admissions, within 30 days, whenever information provided in the application has changed or there is new information relevant to the application. Failure to provide updated or additional information within 30 days after the change or addition to the information originally submitted may be cause for suspension of a positive moral character determination.

It is important to be truthful on the application. The State Bar considers candor to be a significant factor in determining whether an applicant has the good moral character required for admission to practice law.

## **COMPLETING THE DETERMINATION APPLICATION**

Please find information regarding each section of the application below.

Please note that all foreign-language documents must be submitted with a certified English translation.

Confidential Questionnaires will be sent by the Office of Admissions to references, employers, licensing agencies, and law schools listed in your application.

## **PERSONAL & CONTACT INFORMATION**

You are required to provide your name, date and place of birth, email addresses, phone numbers, and mailing address. It is your responsibility to inform the Office of Admissions of any changes to your preferred email address, phone number, and mailing address on record.

## **PURPOSE OF APPLYING FOR MORAL CHARACTER DETERMINATION**

You must select if you are or will apply for full admission to the State Bar, the Multijurisdictional Practice Program, or the Foreign Legal Consultant Program. Each option is discussed below.

Please select "Full admission to the State Bar" if you intend to become a fully licensed attorney in California.

Please select "Multijurisdictional Practice (MJP) Program" if you are a licensed attorney in a U.S. jurisdiction other than California who intends to receive restricted rights to practice within California, under an MJP program (Registered In-House Counsel, Registered Legal Aid Attorney, or Registered Military Spouse Attorney). You must submit a separate application to apply for the MJP program.

Please select “Foreign Legal Consultant (FLC) Program” if you are a licensed attorney in a foreign jurisdiction who intends to receive the right to provide legal advice regarding your foreign country’s law within California, under the FLC program. You must submit a separate application to apply for the FLC program.

### **FORMER NAMES & ALIASES**

You are required to provide all your former names and aliases, including nicknames.

### **DRIVING RECORDS**

You are required to disclose all driver’s licenses you have ever been issued and answer the related questions.

For each jurisdiction, other than California, in which you have held a driver’s license within the last 10 years, you must provide a copy of your driving record that meets the following requirements with your Determination Application:

- an original and certified copy;
- issued within six months of the date on which your current application is submitted; and
- containing at least five years of your driving history or the longest timeframe provided by the jurisdiction, whichever is shorter.

The record must be uploaded to the Applicant Portal or submitted with your hard copy application.

### **RESIDENCE HISTORY**

You are required to provide your physical address, not your mailing address, for each residence that you have had in the last eight years. You must include your current residence and addresses for college and law school residences during this period.

### **ACCOUNTING FOR GAPS IN RESIDENCE HISTORY**

If you submit the Determination Application in the Applicant Portal, this section is automatically calculated for you. If a gap is identified, explain to the best of your recollection where you resided during that period.

If you submit the Determination Application in hard copy, you must review your dates of residence and ensure that you have accounted for the past eight years. If gaps exist, explain to the best of your recollection where you resided during that period.

### **PRE-LEGAL EDUCATION**

For each post-high school educational institution you attended, other than law school, you are required to provide the school’s name and location, your dates of attendance, and your degree earned, if applicable.

## **LEGAL EDUCATION**

For each law school you attended, you are required to provide the school's name and location, your student identification number, your dates of attendance, and your degree earned, if applicable.

You must disclose all law schools even if you do not claim credit for the law study completed at that school.

Education received in a law office or judge's chambers within the Law Office Study Program is not provided in this section.

## **MILITARY SERVICE**

You are required to provide records of your U.S. military service, if applicable. You must include a DD Form 214 or other report of separation for each separation from service, and the form must include your "Type of Separation" and "Character of Service." If you are advised by the Military Personnel Records Center that no such document exists, you must attach a copy of that notification to this application.

You may obtain this form by contacting the Military Personnel Records Center. Acquiring a DD Form 214 or other report of separation from the Military Personnel Records Center can be a time-consuming process. A delay in receiving these records by the State Bar will delay the processing of your application.

Enlistment in foreign military service should be reported in the employment history section.

## **SELF-EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

You are required to provide information for all self-employment. You must include the business name, address, nature, and dates of operation. You must also include your employment duties and indicate if the self-employment was law-related.

You are required to provide a reference who is familiar with your self-employment; the person does not have to be affiliated with the business. You may not include your spouse, partner, or significant other, or anyone related to you by blood or through your spouse, partner, or significant other as the reference. Additionally, do not include a reference who is listed elsewhere in the application as an employment or personal reference. You should not include someone who only has a casual knowledge of you.

## **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

You are required to provide information for all law-related employment since the age of 18. You must disclose any experience in the legal field, whether paid or unpaid, including internships, externships, judicial clerkships, and law clerk positions.

You are also required to provide information for all non-law-related employment that lasted longer than 6 months.

You must include the employer's name, address, your position and employment duties, your reason for leaving, and the dates of your employment. You must also indicate if the employment was law-related.

You are required to provide the name and contact information for your supervisor. If the business is now defunct, you are not required to enter the former employer's address or an email address or phone number for your supervisor. However, if the business is defunct or the supervisor is no longer with the company, but you have current contact information for that person, please provide it. If your supervisor is no longer with the business and you do not have their current contact information, enter "Human Resources" for the Full Name of Supervisor and enter the businesses' information for the supervisors' contact fields.

You may not include your spouse, partner, or significant other, or anyone related to you by blood or through your spouse, partner, or significant other as your supervisor. Additionally, do not include a reference listed elsewhere in the application as a self-employment or personal reference. You should not include someone who only has a casual knowledge of you. Your employers will be contacted as part of the moral character process.

### **ACCOUNTING FOR GAPS IN ACTIVITY**

If you submit the Determination Application in the Applicant Portal, this section is automatically calculated for you. If a gap is identified, explain to the best of your recollection where you were and what you were doing during that period. If you held a job that lasted less than six months and was not law-related, state the business name, your position, and your reason for leaving.

If you submit the Determination Application in hard copy, you must review your education history, employment and self-employment, and military service to ensure that you have accounted for the time since the age of 18. If gaps exist, explain to the best of your recollection where you were and what you were doing during that period. If you held a job that lasted less than six months and was not law-related during the identified period, state the business name, your position, and your reason for leaving.

### **PERSONAL REFERENCES**

You are required to provide five personal references. You must include their names, occupations, length of time known, and contact information. At least one reference must be admitted to practice law in any jurisdiction; they may be inactive or retired. You may only include one of your law professors as a personal reference.

You may not include your spouse, partner, or significant other, or anyone related to you by blood or through your spouse, partner, or significant other as a personal reference. Additionally, do not include a personal reference who is listed elsewhere in the application as an employment or self-employment reference. You should not include someone who only has a casual knowledge of you.

### **CREDENTIALS & LICENSES**

You are required to disclose all applications for a business, trade, or professional license or certification, other than as an attorney, which required proof of good moral character or an examination for

licensure, even if that application was subsequently withdrawn, abandoned, or denied. You must include the license or certification name, your license or certification number if one was issued, effective dates, the license or certification status, and contact information for the issuing authority.

Examples include, but are not limited to, a license or certification as a certified public accountant, patent practitioner, real estate salesperson or broker, teacher, or physician.

## **COMPLAINTS & PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE**

You are required to disclose and describe if:

- you have ever been disbarred, suspended, censured, reprovved, or otherwise disciplined, reprimanded, or disqualified, or had your license revoked as a member of any business, trade, or profession. This includes, but is not limited to, as an attorney, certified public accountant, real estate salesperson or broker, teacher, or physician, or as a holder of public office.
- there have ever been any charges, complaints, or grievances filed against you concerning your conduct as a member of any business, trade, or profession, or as a holder of public office, including pending matters.
- you ever resigned a business, trade, or professional license while charges were pending.
- you ever permitted a business, trade, or professional license to expire or become inactive.

You will be asked to provide supporting documentation. Please upload this information to any of the file upload steps in the Applicant Portal or submit copies with your hard copy application.

## **ABILITY TO PRACTICE LAW**

You must disclose and describe if there is any issue that will currently interfere with your ability to practice law in accordance with the duties and ethical obligations of an attorney. You must also disclose if you are currently the subject of a conservatorship.

## **ADMISSIONS APPLICATIONS TO OTHER JURISDICTIONS - NOT ADMITTED OR PENDING**

You are required to disclose all applications for admission to practice law. This includes, but is not limited to, applications to be admitted by examination, on motion, or on diploma privilege, applications for reinstatement to the bar, and applications for a determination of moral character. Include applications for full licensure or limited practice, even if the application was subsequently withdrawn. You must include the application type, dates of your application or examination, and the reason you have not been admitted or your application is still pending.

## **JURISDICTIONS OF ADMISSION TO PRACTICE LAW**

You are required to disclose all jurisdictions in which you are or have been licensed or otherwise authorized to practice law. This includes, but is not limited to, applications to be admitted by examination, on motion, or on diploma privilege, applications for reinstatement to the bar, and applications for a determination of moral character. Include applications for full licensure or limited practice, even if that application was subsequently withdrawn.

You must include the jurisdiction, your bar number, dates of your application and admission, and your status. If you are inactive, suspended, or retired, you must provide the effective date and the reason for your status.

You must provide a [Certificate of Good Standing](#) (CGS) that includes your admission date and whether you have a history of discipline for each jurisdiction in which you have been fully licensed to practice law. The CGS must be issued within six months of the date on which your current application is submitted. If you submitted a CGS in connection with your registration as an attorney applicant or a bar exam application that was issued within six months of the date on which your current application is submitted, you do not need to provide another CGS. The CGS must be mailed to the Los Angeles Office of Admissions at 845 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90017, unless the jurisdiction is only issuing electronic copies; an electronic copy must be uploaded to the Applicant Portal.

If your status is inactive in another jurisdiction, you only need to submit a letter of disciplinary history certified by the jurisdiction that includes the dates of your admission and when your status changed to inactive.

If you are currently suspended, disbarred, or not in good standing for disciplinary reasons in another jurisdiction, you are not eligible to submit a Determination Application. (Admissions Rules, rule 4.41(C).)

## **CIVIL & ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS**

You are required to disclose any civil action or administrative proceeding to which you are or were a party. This includes, but is not limited to, divorce, dissolution, small claims court proceedings, lawsuits brought by or against you, proceedings related to restraining or protective orders, licensing or other administrative proceedings, and workers' compensation actions. You must also disclose if a judgment has been entered against you. You must complete [Form 1](#) – Record of Civil Actions and Administrative Proceedings for each action or proceeding.

You may be asked to provide supporting documentation. Please upload relevant information to any of the file upload steps in the Applicant Portal or submit copies with your hard copy application.

## **FRAUD, MISREPRESENTATION, & LEGAL MALPRACTICE**

You are required to disclose if you or a company in which you were the sole owner, majority shareholder, officer, or director has ever been the subject of a complaint alleging fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, forgery, or legal malpractice.

You must complete [Form 1](#) – Record of Civil Actions and Administrative Proceedings for each action or proceeding related to the questions above.

You will be asked to provide supporting documentation. Please upload this information to any of the file upload steps in the Applicant Portal or submit copies with your hard copy application.

## **SCHOLASTIC DISCIPLINE**

You are required to disclose and describe if you have ever been found to have violated the honor or conduct code of an educational institution. You are also required to disclose and describe if you have ever been warned, dropped, suspended, placed on disciplinary probation, expelled, requested to resign, allowed to resign or discontinue your studies in lieu of discipline, or otherwise subjected to discipline by an educational institution.

You will be asked to provide supporting documentation. Please upload this information to any of the file upload steps in the **Applicant Portal** or submit copies with your hard copy application.

## **CONVICTIONS**

You are required to disclose and describe if:

- you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony.
- you have ever pleaded guilty or nolo contendere (no contest) to the commission of a misdemeanor or felony.
- you have ever been adjudicated as a juvenile in a case in which the court sustained a misdemeanor or felony count.
- you are the subject of a pending or otherwise unresolved criminal matter or other law enforcement related matter, including an arrest that has not yet resulted in criminal charges.
- you have ever been convicted of a traffic violation that rises to the level of a misdemeanor or felony, which may include Failure to Appear, Driving on a Suspended License, or Driving without a License.
- you have ever been granted immunity in lieu of criminal prosecution.
- you have ever been held in contempt of court.

You may provide a statute of another jurisdiction in lieu of disclosing a law enforcement matter if the statute precludes disclosure to a licensing agency.

You must complete [Form 2](#) – Criminal Cases for each incident. You will be asked to provide supporting documentation as listed on Form 2. Please upload this information in the file upload step in the **Applicant Portal** or submit copies with your hard copy application.

## **BONDEDNESS**

You are required to disclose if you have ever:

- held a bonded position.
- held a position that required your employer to post a bond.
- been refused a request to be bonded.

You are also required to disclose if anyone has ever sought to recover against or cancel your bond.

## **DISCHARGE OF OBLIGATION**

You are required to disclose if you are in default in the performance or discharge of any duty or obligation imposed upon you by a court or administrative agency, including monetary and other judgments, restitution, payment of court fees, and support orders (including child support, family support, spousal support, and alimony).

## **INDEBTEDNESS**

You are required to disclose any past-due debts. This includes, but is not limited to, student loans, tax liabilities, charged off accounts, and those barred by the statute of limitations. You must also disclose if you have ever defaulted on a student loan.

An affirmative response to a question in this section requires that you provide a copy of your credit report dated within the last 30 days.

You do not need to report debt that is current or not past-due.

## **BANKRUPTCY**

You are required to disclose if you:

- have ever been adjudicated as bankrupt.
- have ever had a petition in bankruptcy (personal or business) filed by you or against you.
- have a bankruptcy pending under a Chapter 13 reorganization.
- have ever been sued by an authority of any bankruptcy estate for unlawful preference, conspiracy to conceal assets, or any other fraud or offense.

You must complete [Form 3](#) – Record of Bankruptcy of Insolvency for each bankruptcy petition and [Form 4](#) – Sued by a Receiver, Trustee or Other Authority of Bankruptcy, if applicable. You will be asked to provide supporting documentation as listed on Form 3. Please upload this information in the file upload step in the Applicant Portal or submit copies with your hard copy application.

## **CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY**

You must disclose and describe if you have a chemical dependency issue that will currently interfere with your ability to practice law in accordance with the duties and ethical obligations of an attorney.

## **SUBMITTING THE DETERMINATION APPLICATION**

Please find information regarding submission of the application below. Your application will not be processed until it has been submitted in the Applicant Portal or the hard copy application has been received by the Office of Admissions.

## AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE

If you submitted your Determination Application in the Applicant Portal, you will be prompted to electronically sign an Authorization and Release after answering all the questions and verifying you have completed the application.

If you submit the hard copy application, you must sign and date the Authorization and Release within 30 days of the date the Office of Admissions receives your application; otherwise, your application will be deemed incomplete. The completed hard copy application, signed Authorization and Release, completed "Request for Live Scan Service" form (Live Scan Form) or two FBI FD 258 fingerprint cards, any necessary attachments, and payment must be received at the following address:

Office of Admissions  
The State Bar of California  
845 South Figueroa Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-2515

## FEES (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

General Applicant	Until December 31, 2023	Starting January 1, 2024
Determination Application	\$551	\$725

Attorney Applicant	Until December 31, 2023	Starting January 1, 2024
Determination Application	\$551	\$850

You may remit payment through the Applicant Portal in your moral character case or by attaching payment to the hard copy application via:

- personal check, cashier's check, or money order payable to the State Bar of California.
- a completed Credit Card Authorization Form.

**For credit or debit card payments, a processing fee of 2.5 percent will be added to all charges.**

**If your payment is declined, you will incur a \$20 service charge and you must provide an alternate form of accepted payment to continue the processing of your application.**

## REMINDERS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Before you submit the Determination Application, ensure that you have answered all questions, completed and uploaded (or attached if the application is submitted in hard copy) all supplemental forms, and signed the Authorization and Release. If you submit the application in hard copy, you must attach a completed Live Scan Form or two FBI FD-258 fingerprint cards and payment. If you submit the application in the Applicant Portal, the State Bar will email you the Live Scan Form after

your application has been submitted, and you will remit payment before your application is submitted. An application that does not meet these requirements will be deemed incomplete and will not be considered filed until it is complete.

Prior to submitting the Determination Application, you may upload (or attach if the application is submitted in hard copy) any additional documentation you would like the State Bar to consider. For example, you may provide proof of or a narrative detailing rehabilitative activities you have engaged in since an act of misconduct.

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If the application or a form does not provide sufficient space for a response, continue the response on a separate piece of paper and upload it to the [Applicant Portal](#) or attach it to the back of the hard copy application. Retain a copy of your completed application for reference.

You are required to notify the State Bar of any changes or updates to information provided in the application until you are admitted to practice law, including a pending matter, an address change, or a job change, via the Applicant Portal within 30 days.

You may change an address, email, or telephone number by logging into the Applicant Portal, clicking on your name at the top right of the page, and selecting “My Profile” from the dropdown list. All contact information may be updated on the “My Profile” page, and changes take immediate effect.

An applicant may withdraw an application prior to being notified that a determination of moral character cannot be made because of the need for further inquiry and analysis. An applicant must receive approval from the Office of Admissions to withdraw an application after receipt of such notice.

If you previously received an adverse moral character determination, you may submit another Application for Determination of Moral Character consistent with the direction set forth in the notice of the adverse determination, following the final moral character determination. You must answer all questions on the application, even if you previously provided the information. You must also submit a new completed Live Scan Form or two FBI FD 258 fingerprint cards and the appropriate fee.

Please refer to the State Bar’s [website](#) for information regarding the processing of a Determination Application after submission.

**FURTHER COMMUNICATION**

The State Bar will maintain an official record of all communication with an applicant. Applicants should submit inquiries through the Applicant Portal so that staff may review the relevant issues and prepare to offer tailored information before discussing the matter with the applicant.

Applicants with inquiries that require immediate attention should call the State Bar at 800-843-9053.