

Character & Fitness Information Session

April 16, 2024



Today's Guest Speakers:

- Wendy S. Van Dorn, Esq.
 - Deputy Executive, Committees on Character and Fitness
 - Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department
- Veronica Guerrero, Esq.
 - Counsel to Committee on Character & Fitness
 - New York State Supreme Court
 - Appellate Division, First Department
- Roberto E. Cosentino, Esq.
 - Committee Member of the Appellate Division, First Department Committee on Character & Fitness.

SJU Speakers

- ◎ Eric W. Shannon, Esq.
 - Assoc. Dean for Student Services

- ◎ Rachel R. Paras, Esq.
 - Senior Director of Bar Preparation/Adjunct Professor

Character & Fitness Generally

- Process done *AFTER* bar results that gets you to Esq.!
- Submit forms after you receive certification of your exam results (generally)
- But, detailed process, so start early
 - [NY BOLE website](#)
 - Start your own “bar folder” if haven’t already.

Character & Fitness-Recent Changes

- A Word of Caution:

- It is critical that you read the instructions and application questions carefully, and that you are 100% forthcoming.
- If in doubt, **DISCLOSE!**

- We will share updates as we learn them on the Online Student Center

Are you Consistent with your Law School Application?

- ◉ As part of your Character & Fitness application – you will authorize St. John's to send your record to your jurisdiction
 - We will forward a copy of your application and record
 - They compare the information on your law school and your Character & Fitness applications for **completeness, honesty and consistency**

Some of What We Asked

- ◉ Disciplinary History (school-related) & Criminal History:
 - More than what you may think.
- ◉ ***Ongoing obligation** to disclose anything that happened during law school that **would have been** responsive to our application questions, not just what occurred before you arrived!

What did we ask?

- ◎ **Disciplinary History:** “Have you ever been *subject to any disciplinary action*, placed on academic probation, or dismissed from any school, college, university, or graduate/professional school, or is any such action pending or expected to be brought against you? ... (cont’d)

What did we ask?

- ◎ **Disciplinary History:**
- ◎ ... Please note: although a disciplinary action **may have been expunged or dismissed**, it nevertheless should be disclosed in answer to this question.”

What did we ask?

- ◎ **Criminal History:** “Have you ever, either as an adult or a juvenile, **been cited, arrested, taken into custody, charged with, indicted, convicted or tried for, or pleaded guilty to,** the commission of any felony or misdemeanor or the violation of any law, **except minor parking violations,** or been the subject of any juvenile delinquency or youthful offender proceeding?
 - (cont’d)

What did we ask?

◎ Criminal History: ...

- ... **Please note:** Although a conviction may have been expunged or sealed by an order of the court, it nevertheless should be disclosed in answer to this question.”

How to Amend Your Law School Application

Visit the Online Student Center (where course registration info is posted)

Select “FORMS” on the left-hand side

Select “Law School Application Amendment Request”

How to Amend Your Law School Application



Welcome

Academic Advising

Registrar

Career Development

Pro Bono

Forms

Resources

Bar Info

LL.M.

Welcome

Academic Advising



Registrar



Career Development

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Forms

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[Acknowledgment of Policies-Incoming Students \(Fall 2022\)](#)

[Application for Dual Degree](#)

[Chosen Name Form](#)

[Directed Research Application](#)

[Event Request Form](#)

[Externship Placement Request Form](#) *

[General Request Form](#)

[Law School Application Amendment Request](#)

[Marketing Project Request Form](#)

[Scholarly Writing Request](#)

* Please note: In order to participate in the Externship Program, students must have a confirmed placement TWO WEEKS prior to the start of the semester in which the student wants to participate. Students must return the Externship Placement Registration form to externships@stjohns.edu by that date. Students who do not report their externship placement by the due date will be dropped from the externship seminar. This timing will allow for enrollment and waitlist management as well as the time needed to approve new proposed externship partners.

Detailed Instructions on the Front of the Request Form

1 / 4 | - 100% + |  

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
QUEENS, NEW YORK

Request to Amend Application to Law School

INSTRUCTIONS

To request an amendment to your law school application, type (do not handwrite) your responses within each field. Once complete, print the form, sign it, scan and email it to Kristina Ebanks at ebanksk@stjohns.edu from your SJU email address with the subject line "[LASTNAME] Request to Amend Application." If you cannot physically sign and scan the document with your signature, you may electronically sign it so long as you also include a photo of your student ID along with the e-signed document.

It is critical that you provide as much detail as possible, in keeping with the expectations of state character and fitness committees. This includes detail on (i) what happened and when, (ii) what the ultimate disposition was, and (iii) any supporting documentation that is obtainable.

For example, "I received a ticket in 2016 for speeding" is not sufficient.

How to Amend Your Law School Application

It is critical that you provide as much detail as possible, in keeping with the expectations of the BOLE.

This includes detail on

- (i) what happened and when,
- (ii) what the ultimate disposition was, and
- (iii) any supporting documentation you have or that is obtainable.

For example, "I received a ticket in 2016 for speeding" is not sufficient.

However: "On May 12, 2016 while driving in Sullivan County, New York, I was issued a ticket for speeding 15 miles over the speed limit. I appeared in the county's traffic court to contest the ticket on November 3, 2016. The judge ultimately dismissed the citation for lack of evidence, and no points were accrued on my driving record. Please see the ticket, attached, as well as the certificate of disposition, also attached."

How to Amend Your Law School Application

GENERAL EXPECTATION:

Any obtainable documentation has been obtained.

- For example, calling the precinct where ticket was obtained if you did not keep a copy

If documentation is not obtainable, then a detailed description of the due diligence undertaken to attempt to obtain it

- E.g., Calls, letters, in-person visits, on what dates, information obtained about record-keeping policy, name/title of person spoken to, etc.

Advice:

- Keep copies of any disclosures, as well as any confirmation letters received
- If you have questions or concerns, schedule an appointment to discuss

Overview of C&F Process:

● Character & Fitness Process

- What exactly is the Character & Fitness process?
- What to Prepare
- What Information You'll Need

Overview of C&F Process:

Multi-Department Admission Packet



The screenshot displays the website for The New York State Board of Law Examiners. The header includes the state seal, the board's name, and contact information: office (518) 453-5990, fax (518) 452-5729, TTY: Call 711 (nyrelay.com), and phone hours from Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm Eastern Time.

The left navigation menu lists various links, with a red arrow pointing to "UBE / NYLC / NYLE FA". The main content area is titled "Admission Information" and features a red arrow pointing to the "NOTICE FOR SPRING 2020 GRADUATES REGARDING APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION AND ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS" section. This notice includes a link to a statement from the Appellate Division Presiding Justices regarding bar admission practices.

Below the notice, there is a paragraph of instructions and a list of links for application forms, including Part I Application (updated April 3, 2023), Part II Moral Character, Part III Law Related Employment, Part IV Form Law School Certificate, 50 Hour Pro Bono Requirement, Skills Form Affidavit (updated March 2020), and Pro Bono Scholars Program Affidavit of Completion.

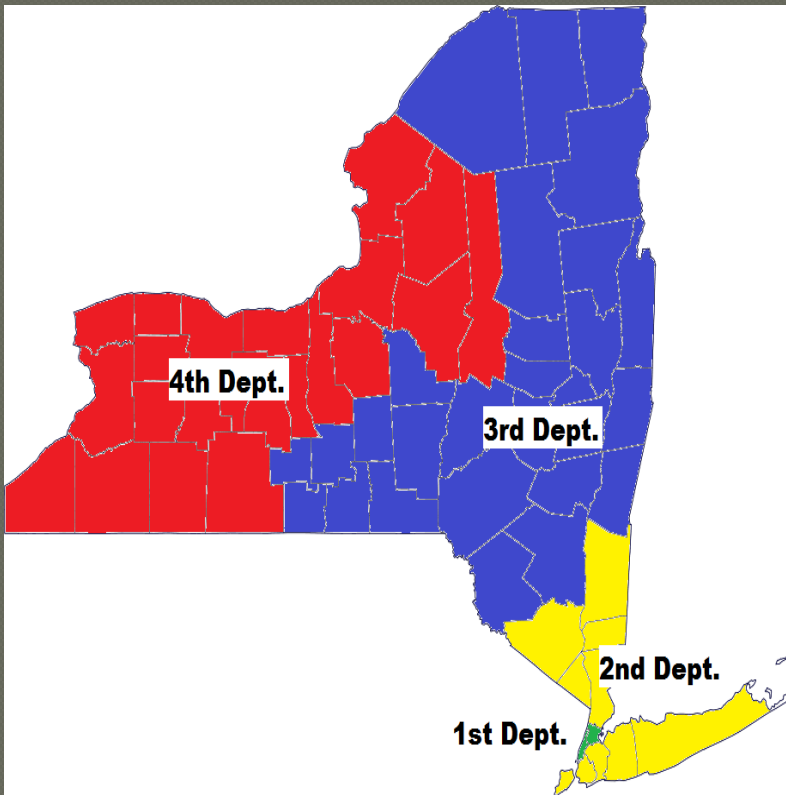
The first item in the numbered list states: "1. The Application for Admission must be filed with the Appellate Division Department as indicated on the Notice of Certification. A copy of the Notice of Certification must be filed along with the completed Application for Admission. Section 520.12(d)(1) of the Rules of the New York State Court of Appeals for the Admission of Attorneys and Counselors at Law requires you to file the complete Application for Admission to the Bar with

Overview of C&F Process:

NY Multi-Department Admission Packet

- Instructions*
- Part I: Application
- Part II: Moral Character
- Part III: Law-related Employment
- Part IV: Form Law School Certificate
- 50 Hour Pro Bono Requirement
- Skills Form Affidavit

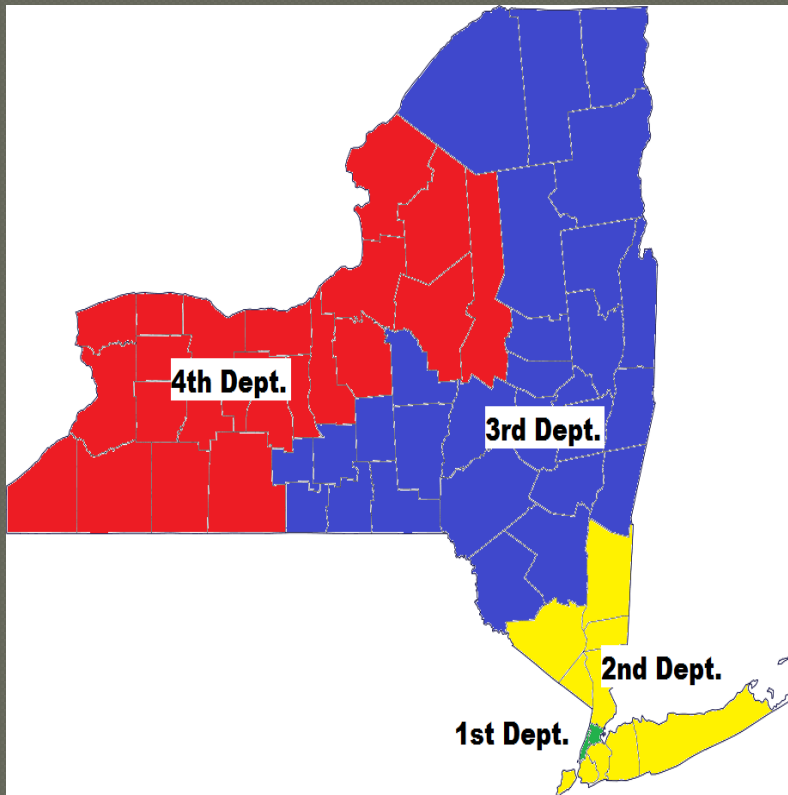
Know Your Department



First Department: New York
(Manhattan) & Bronx

Second Department: Dutchess, Kings,
Queens, Nassau, Westchester, Orange,
Putnam, Richmond, Rockland & Suffolk

Know Your Department



Departments have local rules *in addition to the instructions* provided in the multi-department admission packet

These are available on the Appellate Dep't websites

Common Questions-The Process

- ◉ Where can I find the C&F application for admission to the NY Bar?
- ◉ When should I start the process?
- ◉ Is there a deadline by which I have to file my application for Character and Fitness?
- ◉ Which Appellate Division Department should I submit my application & are all the Department requirements the same?

Common Questions About Moral Character Affirmations and Law Related Employment Affirmations

- What constitutes law-related employment?
- Do I need to list non-law related employment?
- Will I have to be interviewed? What should I expect?

Common Questions-Violations of Any Law

◉ Part I: Question 26

- Was updated last year (April 2023)
- Read the language (and exceptions) carefully!
- For violations that resulted in a formal charge or a plea of guilty (e.g., to a lesser offense), still responsible
- When in doubt: DISCLOSE!

Common Questions

- You must disclose whether you have ever been a complainant, party or witness to or otherwise involved in any **civil or criminal action, proceeding or investigation** not covered by answers to the above questions.

Common Questions

- You are asked to disclose any conduct involving substance abuse, addiction, or mental condition, where applicant **used the condition** as an excuse or in mitigation, or where that conduct led to discipline or investigation.

Notary Services

- In addition to anyone else on campus whom you know is a notary, one of our current 3L students has offered her services to notarize documents free-of-charge at a designated date/time
- We will communicate this information to you via email

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Open Q&A: Now is Your Chance

FINAL THOUGHTS

- ◉ Prepare your Character & Fitness information early & be consistent.
- ◉ If in doubt, report it.

Key Resources

- Contact your Appellate Division C&F Committee with specific questions
- Review all instructions and updates on the NY BOLE website
 - <https://www.nybarexam.org/Default.html>