



FLORIDA BAR APPLICATION
MEMORANDUM

Date: September 27, 2019
To: Fall 2019 Incoming 1L Students
From: Angelique Ortega Fridman, Associate Dean for Student Services
RE: Florida Board of Bar Examiners Registrant Bar Application and Certified Legal Intern Application

In order to become a member of the Florida Bar after graduation or work as a Certified Legal Intern during law school, you must file an application with the Florida Board of Bar Examiners. The clearance process is often lengthy, and, therefore, you must begin this process before the start of your second semester.

Licensure in the State of Florida

If you want to practice law in Florida, the Florida Bar requires a character and fitness clearance prior to obtaining a license. This process starts by completing a Registrant Bar Application in your first year of law school. If you apply before January 15, 2020, the cost is \$100. If you apply by March 15, 2020, the cost is \$350; thereafter, the cost is \$400. In other words, the longer you wait, the higher your Registrant Bar Application fee will be.

Certified Legal Intern (CLI)

A CLI may work under the supervision of a licensed Florida attorney in some public-sector settings. For example, a CLI may work for the State Attorney or Public Defender trying actual cases. Because CLIs are assisting in the representation of individuals or acting on behalf of the State of Florida, the Florida Bar requires character and fitness clearance as one of the requirements of CLI status.

Students who want CLI status must apply to the Florida Board of Bar Examiners for clearance and pay a fee of \$75 (if filed within the first 250 days of beginning law school; the filing fee is \$150 if filed more than 250 days after beginning of law school).

If you file a Registrant Bar Application, you do not have to file a separate CLI application. If you do not plan to practice law in Florida (and therefore do not want to file a Registrant Bar Application), you are strongly advised to register with the Florida Board of Bar Examiners to become a CLI.

Registering with the Florida Bar by January 15, 2020

Clearance is a lengthy process involving a detailed application and extensive background check. On average, the background investigation (which begins after a *complete* application is filed) can take six-to-eight months to complete. In addition to being ineligible to participate in some clinics and externships, without clearance you may find yourself in a situation where you have graduated and passed the bar, but cannot be licensed because your background investigation has not been completed.

FIU Law requires all entering students to file a Registrant Bar Application by January 15, 2020. If you do not submit your application by January 15, 2020, you must inform the Dean's Office in writing and obtain a waiver. You may seek a waiver if you do not intend to take the Florida Bar or become a member of the Florida Bar after graduation, or for other good cause shown. In order to register for 2L classes, you must establish that you have filed your Registrant Bar Application or have obtained a waiver.

How do I get started?

1) Start gathering information.

The clearance process requires students to submit a lot of information, so start looking for these things now:

- a) A list of all of your employers for the last 10 years (or since your 16th birthday, whichever is shorter);
- b) Names of undergraduate, graduate, and law schools you attended;
- c) Information about arrests, traffic tickets, charges or accusations of wrongdoing; and
- d) All of the complete addresses of your former residences for the past 3 years and the dates of residence and city/state information for all of the places you have lived since your 16th birthday.

If you need help researching information, you should consult the research guide on the FIU Law Library website at: <http://libguides.law.fiu.edu/FloridaBarApplication>. If you have a question that is not answered in the research guide, you may submit your question or ask for an individual appointment with a research librarian by selecting the “Ask a Librarian” tab and completing the requested information at: <https://law.fiu.edu/library/>.

(2) Get started with your Registrant Bar Application.

- a) Visit www.floridabarexam.org and click on “Application and Conversion Checklists and Supporting Forms.” Then click on “Register as a First or Second Year Student.” Print the checklist and read the “Introduction to the Online Bar Application” link under Step 3 (item 1) of the checklist.
- b) Create an account. You can create an account under Step 3 (item 2) of the checklist and begin your application. You will have six months from the time you create your account to complete your application.