

REPORTING FOR CHARACTER AND FITNESS

Students are required to report to the school anytime they are charged or convicted with a crime. You must identify on your VLS application form any incidents which occur prior to enrollment. If after you are enrolled, you realize you neglected to report an incident on the application form, you should report it immediately to the Vice Dean for Enrollment as an “amendment to application.” If an incident occurs while you are enrolled as a student, you must report it immediately to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Diversity.

State bar exam applications require that you submit information regarding your **character and fitness to practice law**. Typically, this includes answering a series of questions about any infractions you might have committed. State bar application requirements vary, and may require more details than the Vermont Law School admissions application requires. For example, the bar application may require details about First Offender Programs, offenses that were sealed in juvenile cases, or charges/convictions that have been expunged.

You should carefully review the bar application form and rules of each state where you intend to apply to determine exactly what information is required. It is important that any infractions that you disclose on your bar application be consistent with your law school admissions application and your law school file. Most bar examiners will double-check the information on a bar exam application with that of the applicant’s law school application and record. If there is an inconsistency between the two applications, then the bar examiners become curious about the reason for the discrepancy. This discrepancy can then be interpreted as a failure by the student to fully disclose a criminal history to the law school.

Another issue that creates a discrepancy between a student’s law school file and the bar application arises when a student has been charged, convicted or arrested for an offense while enrolled as a student. Here, it is important to note that the application every student submit to Vermont Law School states that the student “shall promptly inform Vermont Law School if there is any change in any facts indicated herein prior to or *during* enrollment.”

To insure that your bar application is consistent with your law school application and record, amend your law school application by contacting Kathy Hartman, Associate Dean for Enrollment Management. If you need to report incidents, charges or convictions incurred while enrolled, contact Shirley Jefferson, Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Diversity.