



Boston College Law School

Office of Career Services

BAR ADMISSION

Law Student Registration

We recognize that it is often difficult to plan two days in advance, let alone two years; however, it is important that you start thinking about which bar exam(s) you will take during your first year of law school. In some jurisdictions, a financial advantage will result from registering early in your law school career. Financial penalties may exist for late registration. Requirements regarding registration, application deadlines and costs vary greatly by state. We encourage you to research the requirements, during your 1L year, of the two or three jurisdictions in which you are most likely to seek employment upon graduation from law school.

The following link provides general information about bar exam registration:

<http://www.ncbex.org/character-and-fitness/services1/lawregister/>

The following link, A Comprehensive Guide To Bar Admission Requirements, delineates each jurisdiction's requirements, including a chart with bar application deadlines:

http://www.ncbex.org/fileadmin/mediafiles/downloads/Comp_Guide//2011_CompGuide.pdf

The following site provides a link to each jurisdiction's bar admission agency, where you can find information about admission requirements and application forms:

<http://www.ncbex.org/bar-admissions/offices/>

Moral Character and Fitness

In order to be admitted to the bar, you will be required to provide information that attests to your good character and fitness to practice law. Usually, this requires you to identify two or three references who can attest to your character and fitness. You will likely be asked questions regarding criminal convictions, disciplinary actions, and other similar matters. Answer all questions regarding character and fitness accurately and completely. Disclose anything that you think may be relevant. Failure to disclose relevant information may have more detrimental consequences than would have resulted from proper disclosure of the underlying matter.

The Bar Exam: General Information Applicable to All States

The most common format is a two-day bar examination, which consists of one day devoted to the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE), 200-question multiple choice exam, and another day of substantive essay questions tailored for practice in that particular jurisdiction. The essay questions typically cover a broader range of subject areas. Students should research the requirements of their jurisdiction for detailed information about bar exam content. Many jurisdictions post on their websites past bar exam

questions or sample bar exam questions that will give you a sense of what you can expect when taking the bar exam.

Many jurisdictions are adding other multistate tests to the above-described basic format, such as the Multistate Essay Examination (MEE) and the Multistate Performance Test (MPT).

The National Conference of Bar Examiners, www.ncbex.org, provides the standardized legal examinations, which are discussed in more detail below.

Multistate Bar Examination (MBE): This six-hour standardized exam consists of 200 multiple-choice questions covering six substantive areas of law: Constitutional, Contracts, Criminal, Evidence, Real Property and Torts. Currently, all but three jurisdictions – Louisiana, Washington State, and Puerto Rico – incorporate this component into their bar exam formats. Further information can be found at <http://www.ncbex.org/multistate-tests/mbe/>

Multistate Essay Examination (MEE): The MEE is a collection of 30-minute essay questions. Each jurisdiction may choose from a total of 9 possibilities and each jurisdiction also determines its own policy with regard to the relative weight given to the MEE. The essay questions cover the following areas of law: business association (agency and partnership, corporations, limited liability companies), conflict of laws, constitution, contracts, criminal law and procedure, evidence, family law, federal civil procedure, real property, torts, trusts and estates and UCC. Some questions may include more than one area of law. Further information can be found at www.ncbex.org/multistate-tests/mee/ where you can find MEE sample questions, study guides and an information booklet.

Multistate Performance Test (MPT): This consists of two 90-minute skills questions requiring legal and fact analyses, problem solving, resolution of ethical dilemmas, organization and management of a lawyering task, and communication. Further information can be found at www.ncbex.org/multistate-tests/mpt/ where you can find MPT study guides, summaries and an information booklet.

Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE). The MPRE is a two-hour and five minute standardized exam consisting of sixty multiple-choice questions, which test the applicant's knowledge and understanding of ethical standards in the legal profession. Most jurisdictions require passage of the MPRE before you sit for the bar, and many states accept MPRE scores from exams taken within two years of successfully passing the bar exam. Students should consider taking the MPRE during second year or first semester of third year of law school, but check your jurisdiction's requirements regarding how far in advance of sitting for the bar you may take the MPRE. The MPRE is administered three times each year, in March, August, and November. There are application deadlines for each administration of the MPRE. Registration deadlines and corresponding fees for the MPRE can be found online at <https://actapps.act.org/mpre/> You will also find study guides and an information booklet on this site.

DC Bar Admission

There are two ways to gain admission to the bar of the District of Columbia. You may either take the DC bar exam, or you can be admitted by motion if: (1) you are admitted to practice law in another state, (2) you are in good standing in the state where you are admitted to practice, (3) you received a combined scaled score of 266 (essay scaled score of at least 133 + MBE scaled score of at least 133), *and* (4) you received a passing score on the MPRE of at least 75. There are no time restrictions for admission to the DC bar. If you meet the requirements for admission, you may apply as soon as you are eligible or any time thereafter.

You must file your bar application for admission to the DC Bar within 90 days from the date you begin practicing law in the District of Columbia. You may practice for a period of time up to 360 days during the pendency of your application. Please note that this rule applies to all attorneys, including contract attorneys who practice in the District on a regular basis. Even if you are doing what might be characterized as “paralegal work”, such as document review, if you are being held out and billed out as an attorney, you must file your bar application within 90 days of commencing work in the District. (Advisory Opinion 16-05, http://www.dcappeals.gov/dccourts/docs/rule49_opinion16-05.pdf)

See the following links for additional information about admission to the DC bar.

<http://www.dcappeals.gov/dccourts/appeals/coa/index.jsp>

http://www.dcbargov.org/for_lawyers/membership/prospective_members/index.cfm

Patent Bar Exam

Patent attorneys and patent agents may practice patent cases before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). Each practitioner must show proof of good moral character and reputation, have the requisite scientific or technical background, and pass the registration examination commonly known as the patent bar exam. You do not have to have passed a state bar exam to take the patent bar. For additional information about the patent bar, visit <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/dcom/olia/oed/examregist.htm>.

Reciprocity

Some jurisdictions offer reciprocal bar admission to practicing attorneys in good standing in other jurisdictions. Most states offering reciprocity require from three to seven years of practice in another jurisdiction before reciprocity is permitted. In some states, reciprocity is not available. You must take an exam, sometimes called an attorney exam, before being permitted to practice in states without reciprocity. The following link provides a chart with information about reciprocity in each state:

<http://juristech.com/chart.html>.