

Information Pertaining to the Bar Examination

Qualifications for taking a Massachusetts bar examination are set forth in Supreme Judicial Court Rule 3:01. Any uncertainties relating to eligibility must be sent to the Board of Bar Examiners, Suffolk County Courthouse, 3 Pemberton Square, Suite 707, Boston, MA 02108, at least two months prior to filing an application.

The Bar Exam:

The Massachusetts bar examination is held on two consecutive days and consists of two parts, the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) on day one and Essay questions on day two.

The MBE is a national exam developed by the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) and it consists of 200 multiple choice questions. The MBE is divided into morning and afternoon sessions of three hours each, with 100 questions in each session. The MBE is given on the last Wednesday of February and July of each year. Additional information about the MBE can be obtained from NCBE's web site at www.ncbex.org/multistate-tests/mbe/.

The essay exam is developed by the Board of Bar Examiners and it consists of ten essay questions on the subject matter listed below. It is given on the Thursday following the MBE. The Essay exam is also divided into morning and afternoon sessions of three hours each, with five essay questions in each session.

Subjects Tested under Rule 3:01, § 3:

Applicants will be expected to be familiar with the law in the following fields:

Agency	Federal Rules of Civil Procedure
Business Organizations	Massachusetts Rules of Civil Procedure
Constitutional Law	Professional Responsibility
Contracts	Real Property (including Mortgages)
Criminal Law	Torts
Descent & Distribution of Estates	Trusts
Domestic Relations	Unfair or Deceptive Practices (G.L.c. 93A)
Evidence (including Federal Rules)	Uniform Commercial Code (articles 1-9)
Federal Jurisdiction	Wills

Place, Time and Date:

Law examinations are held at least twice a year in Boston, and in such other place or places, if any, as the Board shall designate. Currently the bar exam is given at the World Trade Center in Boston with a smaller test site at Western New England College School of Law in Springfield, MA. All applicants will be seated in Boston unless a timely Springfield seating request form is received by the Board of Bar Examiners. The hours of the examination are from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on each day with luncheon intermission. The dates of the bar examinations for the next three years are as follows:

Year	February	July
2009	February 25 & 26, 2009	July 29 & 30, 2009
2010	February 24 & 25, 2010	July 28 & 29, 2010
2011	February 23 & 24, 2011	July 27 & 28, 2011

Personal Identification: Personal identification will be checked at your assigned seat by proctors. Acceptable ID must at a minimum bear your name, signature and a recognizable photograph, i.e. photo bearing forms such as a driver's license, passport or employee or student ID card.

Grading:

Each examination book will be graded by experienced members of the bar under the supervision of members of the Board. The Massachusetts Board of Bar Examiners has adopted the following scoring method for the bar examination.

The MBE part contains 200 multiple choice questions. Scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly. Applicants are therefore advised to answer every question. The total number of correct answers, adjusted statistically to provide the variations in question difficulties in relation to previous MBE examinations, is an applicant's MBE Scaled Score. The Essay Examination part contains ten questions, each question graded on the basis of 0-7 points. The sum of the points obtained on the 10 questions is the applicant's Raw Essay Score.

In order to combine a Raw Essay Score with an MBE Scaled Score, it is necessary to change (or convert) a Raw Essay Score to a score on the same distribution of scores as the MBE Scaled Score. The Essay Scaled Score and the MBE Scaled Score will be added together for the Total Combined Scaled Score. A Total Combined Scaled Score of 270 or greater is the passing score on the bar examination.

Before the results of the written bar examination become final, the Board will re-read the Essay Examinations of those applicants whose Total Combined Scaled Score is between 265 and 270; the final raw score for such Essay Examinations will be the average of the scores of the two readings. The resulting average after the essay has been reread could be higher or lower than the original score. Essay examinations are not subject to any further re-reading.

N.B. There is no “minimum” or required “passing” scaled score on the MBE part (or the essay part) of the written bar examination. A high score on one part can compensate for a lower score on the other part when the two scores are added together for a total combined scaled score of 270. (See above)

Address Changes:

If your address changes after the examination, inform the Board in writing by October 1st for the July exam and April 1st for the February exam so that our records can be updated and your result letters can be mailed to the correct address.

Result Letters:

Each applicant will receive by mail a written notice of the results of the examination as soon as it is practicable. As a general rule, result letters are mailed on or before May 15 and November 15 respectively for the preceding February and July exams. A list of those who passed the written portion of the bar examination is posted on the Board’s web site www.mass.gov/bbe two days after the mailing of the results. Commencing on the fifth business day after the pass list is posted on the web site, an applicant who has not received his/her notice may receive a duplicate notice upon written request to the Board of Bar Examiners.

Security:

The following link will provide information as to the Bar Examination Security Policy.
<http://www.mass.gov/bbe/security.htm>