

MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS

INFORMATION FOR BAR EXAMINATION APPLICANTS

Subjects

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

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

Board of Bar Examiners Suggestions for Writing the Massachusetts Essay Examination

Think before you write.

Read each question carefully; think through the facts, and their necessary implications. Outline the issues or problems; reach your conclusions; analyze your conclusions from the standpoints both of the law and of common-sense; revise them if necessary. Then decide on a logical, orderly, and convincing arrangement for the statement of your views. **You are not ready to write until you have done all that.**

Do not restate the facts.

The examiners know what the facts are and you have no time to waste.

Do not state abstract or irrelevant propositions of law.

It is usually undesirable to begin an answer with a legal proposition. If the proposition is applicable it will be more appropriate later in the answer, in order to indicate the reason for your conclusion. If it is not applicable, it cannot help you to state it. Although it is seldom necessary to state any applicable rule of law in full detail, make a sufficiently detailed reference to it in

your answer so that the examiner will not be in doubt as to your knowledge of it and of the conditions, which makes its application proper. Do not, by speculating on what the case would have been if the facts had been different, nor in any other way, work into your answer some point of law with which you happen to be familiar, but which is not called for by the question. The examiners are not interested in knowing how many rules of law you have learned, but rather, the way in which you apply the applicable rules to the facts stated.

Discuss as many problems that you can identify.

A grasp of all the issues is essential. For example, if you identify three issues, do not waste time on discussing only one.

Express yourself clearly, as a lawyer should.

If handwriting the essay, **write legibly**. Avoid ambiguous, meaningless, and rambling statements; verbosity, and long, involved sentences; undue repetition; and flippancy, slang and colloquialism.

The purpose of the bar examination is to test your ability to think and express yourself as a lawyer.

The bar exam is designed to test your ability to apply what you have already learned to the facts of the problems such as those which might arise in your practice. The value of an answer depends not only upon your conclusions, but even more upon the evidence it displays of the elements mentioned above.

Grading Information

The **Multistate Bar Exam (MBE)** contains two-hundred (200) multiple choice questions. Scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly. The total number of correct answers, adjusted statistically to provide the variations in question difficulties in relation to previous MBE examinations, is an examinee's **MBE Scaled Score**.

The **Essay Examination** contains ten (10) questions, each graded on the basis of zero to seven (0-7) points. The sum of the points obtained on the ten (10) questions is the examinee'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 Scaled Score**.

For additional grading information, go to [Bar Exam Scoring Information](#).

Passing Score

A Total Scaled Score of 270 or greater is the passing score on the Massachusetts bar examination.

Essay Examination Rereads

Before the results of the written law examination become final, the Board of Bar Examiners will re-read the Essay Examinations of those applicants whose **Total Scaled Score is 265 or more but less than 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 re-read could be higher or lower than the original score. There is no minimum or required passing scaled score for the MBE part or a minimum or passing score for the essay part of the written bar examination. A high score on one part can compensate for a low score on the other part when the two scores are added together for a total scaled score of 270.

No additional re-reads will be conducted.

Amending your Bar Application

Board of Bar Examiners Rule V.1.2 establishes a continuing duty to disclose **promptly** changes and updates to information provided on your bar application. This obligation remains in effect until you have been administered the Oath of Attorney. You may call the office of the Board of Bar Examiners at (617) 482-4466 if you have questions regarding this requirement.

Postal and Email Address Changes

Change of address forms are available at www.mass.gov/bbe and should be submitted to the Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court for Suffolk County. Address changes including an email address change must be received by the Clerk's Office by early October for the July examination and by early April for the February examination in order to ensure proper and timely delivery of your emailed examination results.

Receiving your Exam Results

Bar exam results are emailed to the email address of record submitted by you to the Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court for Suffolk County. Exam results will not be provided by letter, telephone, or in person. While there is no predetermined date for releasing the results of the bar examination, as a general rule, email results will be emailed April and October, respectively, for the preceding February and July exams. Examinees that have passed the written portion of the examination (MBE and Essay) will be listed on the Board of Bar Examiner's webpage at www.mass.gov/bbe three days after the individual bar exam results are emailed.

Transferring your Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) Scores

From another Jurisdiction to Massachusetts

If you are taking the MBE portion of the bar examination concurrently in another jurisdiction you must make arrangements to have your MBE score transferred to Massachusetts following the procedures outlined by that jurisdiction. All MBE requests for score transfers from another jurisdiction should be completed with required fees paid to the transferring jurisdiction **prior** to sitting for the essay portion of the Massachusetts Bar Examination.

Transferred scores must be received by the Board of Bar Examiners from the transferring jurisdiction before September 8 for the July exam or March 29 for the February exam.

You are solely responsible to ensure the timely transfer of your concurrent MBE score to Massachusetts. Transferred MBE scores should be sent from the transferring jurisdiction to the Massachusetts Board of Bar Examiners, Edward W. Brooke Courthouse, 24 New Chardon Street, 1st Flr., Boston, MA 02114.

From Massachusetts to another Jurisdiction

If you are taking the MBE portion of the bar examination in Massachusetts and wish to have your MBE score transferred to another jurisdiction, you must complete the [MBE Transfer and Score Advisory Request Form](#).

This form, along with a fee of \$25.00 payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, must be submitted to the Board of Bar Examiners as soon as possible. Personal checks are NOT accepted.

MBE Score Advisory

To determine whether the MBE score previously earned in Massachusetts meets the requirements for admission in another jurisdiction, please complete the advisory portion on the [MBE Transfer and Score Advisory Request Form](#).

This form, along with a fee of \$25.00 payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, may be submitted to the Board of Bar Examiners. Massachusetts does not release a precise MBE score achieved in Massachusetts to an examinee. For specific requests and limitations of other jurisdictions, contact those jurisdictions.