Pennsylvania Bar Exam Information

Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners

Mailing Address
Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners
Pennsylvania Judicial Center
P.O Box 62535
Harrisburg, PA 17106-2535

Physical Address
(Overnight Deliveries via DHL, FedEx, UPS, etc.)
Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners
Pennsylvania Judicial Center
601 Commonwealth Ave., Suite 3600
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0901

Telephone number:  (717) 231-3350
Fax number:  (717) 231-3351

www.pabarexam.org

Bar Exam Format

The Pennsylvania bar examination is a two day examination:

- **Day 1 (Tuesday):** One Performance Test (PT) question and six essay questions. Students are give 3 hours in the morning to complete the PT and 2 essay questions and 3 hours in the afternoon to complete 4 essay questions.
- **Day 2 (Wednesday):** Multistate Bar Examination (MBE), a 200 question, multiple-choice exam. In both the morning and afternoon sessions, students are given 3 hours to complete 100 questions.

Subjects Tested

**Tuesday:** Performance Test and Essay Examination

**Wednesday:** Multistate Bar Examination

**PERFORMANCE TEST**
"Closed universe" practical problem using instructions, factual data, cases, statutes and other reference material supplied by examiners. The PT is designed to test an applicant’s ability to use fundamental lawyering skills in a
realistic situation. Each test evaluates an applicant’s ability to complete a task, which a beginning lawyer should be able to accomplish. All law necessary for this portion of the exam is provided.

**ESSAY EXAMINATION**

The essay examination consists of six essay questions that cover one or more of the following subjects:

- Business Organizations (including corporations, partnerships, limited liability companies and professional corporations)
- Civil Procedure (including Pennsylvania Civil Procedure and Federal Jurisdiction and Procedure)
- Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure (including related federal and Pennsylvania constitutional issues and also including Pennsylvania D.U.I. law)
- Conflict of Laws
- Contracts and U.C.C. Article II (Sales)
- Employment Discrimination (limited to Title VII, ADA and ADEA)
- Evidence (including Federal Rules of Evidence and Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence)
- Family Law
- Federal Constitutional Law
- Federal Income Taxes (personal only and limited to taxable and non-taxable income, deductions, proprietorships and capital transactions)
- Professional Responsibility
- Real Property
- Torts
- Wills, Trusts and Decedents' Estates (including related fiduciary responsibilities)

Applicants are expected to demonstrate their knowledge of Pennsylvania law where applicable when answering the essay portion of the bar examination. The value of an essay answer on the Pennsylvania bar exam depends not so much upon the correctness of the conclusions, as upon the recognition of issues and the quality of the discussion that evidences an ability to apply the law to the facts presented, and to reason in a logical manner in arriving at a conclusion. Factors such as grammar, penmanship and spelling are not considered in the grading of the essay answers.

**MULTISTATE BAR EXAMINATION**

The MBE consists of 200 multiple choice questions that cover the following subjects:

- Constitutional Law
- Contracts and Sales (Article II of the U.C.C.)
- Criminal Law and Procedure
- Evidence
- Real Property
- Torts

**Bar Exam Dates**

The Pennsylvania Bar Exam is administered on the Wednesday in February and July, and on the preceding Tuesday, each year.

**2011 Winter:** February 22 - 23, 2011

**2011 Summer:** July 26 - 27, 2011
The New Jersey Bar Exam is administered on the last Wednesday in February and July, and on the following Thursday, each year.


**Filing Fees and Deadlines**

Application fees and application deadlines are established for each exam. The fees and deadlines that were in effect last year may not be in effect during the coming year. There is a sliding scale of application fees, depending on the date the application is submitted. The sooner you submit your application, the less expensive it is to take the Pennsylvania bar exam.

The most current information is available at [www.pabarexam.org](http://www.pabarexam.org). Applications can be requested either in writing or through the web site.

**Grading and Results**

In addition to the other examination requirements, a successful applicant for admission to the bar of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must attain a minimum scaled score of 272 on the combined scores of the MBE and the essay portion, including the Performance Test.

The six answers to the essay examination and the PT (valued at 1.5 times an essay question) will be graded, totaled and scaled to the MBE. The combined essay and PT scores will be weighted at 55%, and the MBE score will be weighted at 45% of the total scaled score. The scaled scores of the PT/essay examination and MBE will then be combined to determine whether a scaled score of 272 or higher has been attained. The web site for the Pennsylvania Board of Bar Examiners ([www.pabarexam.org](http://www.pabarexam.org)) will provide the official release date for the results of the bar exam in early April (for February) or October (for July).

**Note**: Applicants are required to sit for all sessions of the bar examination (both the morning and afternoon sessions of the PT/Essay Examination and MBE), and make a good faith effort to answer each question. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

The PT and essay answers are graded by the examiners and readers, all of whom are licensed Pennsylvania attorneys. The examiners and readers are hired by the Board and report to the Executive Director and the Supervising Law Examiner. Each examiner has two readers who assist in the grading of that examiner’s essay question. The identity of the examiners and readers is confidential to protect the integrity of the bar examination process.

**Reciprocity**

**Admission on Motion**
May be admitted without exam from states admitting attorneys from Pennsylvania without exam. Since admission in reciprocal state, must have practiced (including teaching in any of the accredited U.S. law
Schools) for at least 5 of 7 years immediately preceding application. Must also be a graduate of an ABA accredited law school. Must also have achieved a minimum scaled score of 75 on the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE), for admission to the bar of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**Acceptance of MBE Score**
Pennsylvania does not accept an MBE score from an exam taken in another jurisdiction. Applicants can take two bar examinations simultaneously (i.e. PA and NJ or PA and MA) by taking the MBE in Pennsylvania and having that score transferred to another jurisdiction.

**Take Two Bar Exams**
Courses are offered in preparation for both the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Bar exams, with a combined course available at most of our locations. Students may register for Pennsylvania only, New Jersey only or for the Pennsylvania/New Jersey combination course.