

COMMONWEALTH BAR EXAMINATION

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS



COMMONWEALTH SUPREME COURT

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NOTICE: Please contact the Bar Administrator for updated information on application and admissions policies and requirements.

The Commonwealth Bar Examination is administered twice a year, in late February and July. The next bar examination is scheduled for February 27 and 28, 2002. The examination will be administered at the Commonwealth Supreme Court in Susupe, Saipan.

I. APPLICATIONS

The application forms for the bar examination consist of (1) the General Application and (2) the Request for Preparation of a Character and Fitness Report. The forms are available at the Commonwealth Supreme Court. Care should be taken in answering the questionnaire. All applicants are regular applicants unless he or she can show that he or she qualifies for the attorney bar examination.

The application forms must be filed with the Bar Administrator at the Commonwealth Supreme Court along with the required fee no later than 60 days prior to the first day of the examination. Late applications are accepted between 60 and 45 days prior to the first day of examination, but late fees are imposed. All fees paid are non-refundable and will not be credited to future examinations.

The applicant shall submit one (1) original and one (1) copy of the application forms.

(a) Regular Applicant

The fee for Regular Applicant is \$250.00. In addition, the following fees are assessed:

Character Report Fee	Ranges from \$75.00 to \$300.00. (See application form)
Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) fee	\$50.00
Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE)	\$48.00

The MBE and MPRE fees are set by the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) and must be paid if an applicant is not exempted from taking those portions of the examination.

If an applicant has taken the MBE within three years of the examination for which he or she applies, he/she need not take the MBE again if he/she has attained a scaled score of at least 120. It is the applicant's responsibility to have NCBE or the jurisdiction holding the score to timely forward the score to the Supreme Court. Should an applicant need to take the MBE in the Northern Mariana Islands, he/she must directly apply to the CNMI Bar to take the MBE. The Applicant must submit with such application a check made payable to NCBE the required fee for the test. The applicant must specify that he/she will be taking the MBE in this jurisdiction, and the date of the particular MBE administration.

If an applicant has taken the MPRE within three years of the examination for which he or she applies and attained a scaled score of 75 or over, he/she need not take this portion of the examination. It is the responsibility of the applicant to have the NCBE or the jurisdiction holding the score to timely forward it to the Supreme Court. Should an applicant need to take the MPRE in the Northern Mariana Islands, he/she may directly apply to the CNMI Supreme Court. The

applicant shall submit his or her application together with the MPRE testing fee (check payable to the National Conference of Bar Examiners), and specify the date of the MPRE exam he/she wishes to take.

(b) Attorney Applicant

The attorney application fee is \$300.00. In addition, the following fees are assessed:

Character Report: Ranges from \$75.00 to \$400.00 (See application form)
MPRE (if applicable): \$48.00

If a person is an attorney licensed to practice in any of the states, territories or possessions of the United States and he or she has been in the active practice of law for at least five years out of the last 12 years, then that person can apply to take the attorney's bar examination.

Special attention should be paid to verifying the applicant's attorney license and practice requirements. The applicant must satisfy the court that he or she is qualified to take the attorney's examination. Whether the attorney applicant has satisfied the required number of years of practice of law shall be exclusively determined by the Supreme Court. The applicant shall provide the Court with a Certificate of Bar Admission and Good Standing from every jurisdiction he or she has been admitted to practice when filing as an attorney applicant.

The examination for attorney applicants consists of up to six essay questions and one, 90-minute Multistate Performance Test held on Wednesday morning of examination week. The Multi-state Bar Examination (MBE) is not required of the attorney applicants.

In addition, if the attorney applicant has not taken and passed the MPRE within three years of the examination, he or she may apply directly to the Supreme Court, pay the fee (cashier's check payable to the NCBE), and take and pass the examination.

II. THE EXAMINATION

(a) Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) Portion

The MBE will be administered on Thursday, February 28, 2002. It is divided into a three-hour morning session which begins at 8:00 a.m. and a three-hour afternoon session which begins at 1:00 p.m.

The examination consists of 200 multiple choice questions on the following subjects: constitutional law, contracts, criminal law, evidence, real property and torts. The MBE is a national exam and does not contain specific CNMI local law questions.

(b) Essay and Multistate Performance Test Portion

The essay portion of the examination consists of the Multistate Performance Test (MPT) and essay questions. The essay portion of the examination will be administered on Wednesday, February 27, 2002.

For the July 2001 examination, attorney applicants' essay portion will consist of one 90-minute MPT and three essay questions. Regular applicants' essay portion will consist of one 90-minute MPT and eight essay questions.

1. Essay Subjects

For the February 2002 examination, essay subjects for attorney applicants may cover any of the following areas of law:

- a. Civil Procedure
- b. Local Appellate Practice
- c. Local Law

For the February 2002 examination, essay subjects for regular applicants may cover the same subjects as the attorney's examination as well as:

- a. Agency/Partnership
- b. Corporation
- c. Trust and Decedent's Estate
- d. UCC (Sales, Secured Transactions, and Commercial Paper)

All the essays (except for the Local Appellate Practice and Local Law) will be taken from the Multistate Essay Examination (MEE), prepared under the auspices of NCBE. Subject matter outlines are included in the MEE Booklet and can also be found at www.ncbex.org.

2. MPT

The MPT, also prepared by NCBE, is designed to test fundamental skills expected of lawyers. The tested skills may include fact analysis, legal analysis, ethics, problem solving, communication and organization and management of a legal task. The MPT has a grade equivalence of two essay questions.

3. Other Procedures.

Applicants are required to write legibly. If a handwriting cannot be read, it may affect the grading. Those applicants who wish to type out their exam answers must advise the Bar Administrator in writing, when filing their bar examination application. Additional information will be provided to those who will type their exam answers.

Each essay question must be answered in three pages only or less - one side of the paper only, unless more pages are indicated. Standard answer sheets will be provided on examination day. Bring at least three (3) ball point pens with black ink to write your answers.

The amount of time to be allotted to answer each essay question is 35 minutes. However, applicants may divide up their time any way they wish when answering the questions per session.

(c) Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE)

The MPRE is a two hour, fifty-question examination administered three times a year. Information on testing dates, fees,

and applications can be obtained directly from NCBE or the Bar Administrator. The applicant is responsible for applying and arranging to take the MPRE either in the Commonwealth or in another jurisdiction. Only those applicants who apply in the Commonwealth or whose names are received from the American College Testing or NCBE will be allowed to take the exam.

III. GRADING

(a) **MBE**

The MBE answer sheets are sent to the American College Testing (ACT) for scoring immediately after the exam. A raw score (actual number correct) and scaled score (adjusted correct answers to other scores received in the examination) are provided. A scaled score of 120 or higher is the passing score on the MBE.

(b) **ESSAY**

All essay scores are compiled and a composite percentage is attained for each applicant. An average score of 65 or higher is passing on the essay and MPT portion of the examination.

(c) **MPRE**

The MPRE is graded under the auspices of NCBE. A scaled score of 75 or greater is the passing score on the MPRE.

(d) **No Combining of Scores**

An applicant must separately pass the Essay, MBE and MPRE portions of the bar examination. The scores from each portion shall not be combined and averaged.

(e) **Credit for Portions of Examination**

- (1) If an applicant takes and passes the MBE or MPRE, he or she need not take that portion of the exam again. If the MBE or MPRE score is not passing, the applicant shall retake the portion failed, regardless of whether he or she has passed the essay portion of the exam.
- (2) If an applicant fails to pass only the essay portion of the exam, he or she must retake and pass that portion of the exam, regardless of whether he or she has passed both the MBE or MPRE.
- (3) Where an applicant has failed either the MBE or MPRE or both, a passing score on the essay portion of the exam shall be valid for a period of not more than two (2) years from the date of taking.

IV. BAR EXAMINATION RESULTS

Bar examination results are released approximately two months after the bar examination. The official result letter is sent by U.S. Postal Service. Applicants should not contact the Bar Administrator or court staff about examination results

during the six months subsequent to the examination.

V. OATH OF ADMISSIONS CEREMONY

Applicants who pass the examination and satisfy the character and fitness requirements are expected to participate in the Oath of Admissions Ceremony, conducted about two to three weeks from the date of the official result letter. The ceremony takes place in the Supreme Court courtroom.