

Computer Based Testing (CBT) Information



The Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners

Please read this informational brochure carefully!

DO NOT bring this brochure with you to the examination room.

You will be provided with all necessary instructions at the examination.

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CBT OVERVIEW AND BASIC PROCEDURES

Overview

Bar exam applicants have the option to provide answers to the written portions (i.e., PT and Essay) of the bar examination using a personal laptop computer under certain conditions. The PT and Essay questions will be provided in booklet format, not electronic format. A software program called SofTest®, developed by [ExamSoft Worldwide, Inc.](#) (ExamSoft) will be utilized, which prevents a test taker from accessing any file other than the word processing function provided by the software during the written portions of the examination. The implementation of CBT is a direct result of the Board's continuing goal to enhance the bar admission process and technological advancements in the field of testing.

CBT applicants should read/complete the following steps for CBT:

1. Read the Frequently Asked Questions portion of this document to ensure you have a good understanding of the CBT procedures.
2. Ensure that you have access to a dependable laptop which meets the minimum requirements as discussed in the *Laptop and Technical Questions* section of the *Frequently Asked Questions*.
3. Indicate on your bar application to sit for the Pennsylvania Bar Examination that you wish to use CBT for the Performance Test (PT)/Essay portions of the examination. A non-refundable/non-transferable user fee must be paid once you select this option.
4. Approximately six weeks prior to the examination, you will receive an email with specific instructions regarding downloading the SofTest software. Once you have downloaded and installed the software, you will need to register the software by taking two Mock Exams.
 - a. You will NOT be able to test with your laptop computer if you do not successfully download and register the software PRIOR to the date of the exam.
5. Once the initial download process is complete, you will download secure examination answer files.
 - a. These files are password protected. You cannot open them until the PT/Essay day (Tuesday) of the bar examination.
 - b. Please contact ExamSoft at 866-429-8889 if you have any questions or problems with the downloading of your examination answer files.
6. Complete the Mock Exam twice, and take the "Practice Exam" several times to test your laptop computer. The upload process in the Mock Exam will familiarize you with the proper procedures.
7. Following the completion of the examination on Tuesday, you will be required to log onto a web site and upload your examination answer files. Instructions for uploading your answer files to the website, will be provided when you leave the examination site.

NOTE: Your PT/Essay answers MUST be uploaded by 11:00 p.m. on the PT/essay day of the bar examination (Tuesday). Failure to upload may result in disqualification.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT EXAMSOFT AND THE SOFTWARE

Who is ExamSoft?

ExamSoft Worldwide, Inc. is a software developer specializing in computerized assessment and assessment administration programs. The Board of Law Examiners contracts with this vendor to provide technology in administering CBT.

What is SofTest™?

SofTest is a high stakes assessment program developed and licensed by ExamSoft that enables applicants to securely take examinations downloaded to their own laptop computers by blocking access to files, programs and the Internet during the bar exam.

How reliable is SofTest?

Over 2,000,000 exams have been successfully administered using SofTest. SofTest is used by 19 State Supreme Courts for delivery of the Bar and Legal Specialization exams and at over 120 colleges and universities. SofTest has several safety features to ensure that answers entered are not lost.

What is FlexSite?

FlexSite is ExamSoft's Internet-based exam delivery option. Using SofTest, you will download your exam files prior to the day of the examination, and upload your answers after the examination via the Internet. You WILL NOT require Internet connectivity during the examination. You WILL require Internet connectivity to download your exam files and upload your answers.

LAPTOP AND TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

What are the minimum system requirements for using SofTest?

SofTest can be used on virtually any modern computer (i.e. purchased within the last 3-4 years). It is not possible to take secure exams through a virtual operating system such as Microsoft's Virtual Machine, Parallels or VMware, VMware Fusion or any other virtual operating system environment. Although SofTest can be installed and registered on virtual platforms, it will only be enabled for non-secure Practice Exams. Specific system requirements are noted below:

PC Requirements:

CPU = 1 GHz Pentium III or Industry Equivalent

RAM = 1 GB

Drives = 50 MB of free space

Operating System = English 32-bit Versions of Windows XP, 32-bit and 64-bit Versions of Windows Vista and Windows 7. SofTest may not be used in virtual operating systems.

Software = Internet Explorer 7.0 or later. Internet connection for SofTest Installation, Exam Download and Upload

Screen Resolution must be 1024x768 or higher

Administrator level account permissions

Mac Requirements

Mac Requirements:

CPU = Intel processor

RAM = 512 MB

Drives = 50 MB or higher free disk space

Operating System = MAC OS X 10.5.8 or 10.6 (Leopard or Snow Leopard). Mac OS X 10.7 (Lion) is not supported. SofTest may not be used in virtual operating systems.

Software = Internet browser. Internet connection for SofTest Installation, Exam Download and Upload

Administrator level account permissions

May I use my Macintosh laptop with the software?

Beginning in February 2012, applicants with Macintosh computers can install a native Macintosh version of SofTest. No special provisions need to be taken with the laptop, provided the laptop meets the minimum requirements mentioned above.

Does it matter what type of laptop I use?

The specific model or make of your laptop does not have a direct impact, provided you meet the minimum system requirements (listed directly above). It is imperative that you make sure you are using a dependable laptop, and that you test the software on the laptop several times prior to examination day.

Do I need a floppy disk or other external media drive?

You do **NOT** need a floppy drive to take CBT. The FlexSite method employed by the Board of Law Examiners ensures that you have both a primary copy of your exam file, and multiple reliable backup copies on your hard drive. Therefore, a floppy disk drive, or any other external media drive (CDRW drive, flash drive, zip drive, etc.) is not required.

Can I bring an external mouse or keyboard?

You can bring an external mouse or keyboard.

Will spell check be enabled on SofTest?

No, spell check is disabled on the PA Bar edition of SofTest.

How do I hide my screen during the exam?

If you need to leave your seat at the examination site, you can hide the text on your screen with a built in screensaver. Simply select "View" and then "Hide Exam."

Can I use more than one laptop for the examination (a backup laptop scenario)?

You can use *ONLY* one laptop for CBT. This laptop will be the one you must bring with you to the examination site on the day of the examination. If you have followed all of the registration steps in the "Registration Checklist for Laptop Users" properly, your laptop should function adequately for the examination. Therefore, no backup laptop would be necessary. If you have problems downloading software prior to the examination, contact ExamSoft at: 866-429-8889.

Where can I get further advanced technical information on the hardware requirements and software?

ExamSoft offers further advanced technical support answers on their web site at the following location:

<http://support.examsoft.com/>

This page answers many more advanced computer and software setup questions, such as:

1. How to install SofTest for use with more than one jurisdiction.
2. Common errors which happen during the examination and trouble-shooting.
3. Downloading software while a firewall is running on your laptop.
4. Having administrator rights for your user account on your laptop.

REGISTERING YOUR COMPUTER FOR CBT

What is the SofTest registration process?

Provided you have requested CBT with the Board office and been approved, you will need to register your computer with ExamSoft. This registration process confirms that you have downloaded and installed SofTest, registered your copy of SofTest, and downloaded your exam(s) so you may use your computer on examination day. This process can ONLY be completed on one computer, so make sure you have a reliable laptop ready before downloading any software.

How do I sign up and register?

You must notify the Board office that you intend to take the PT/essay examination on a laptop. You must choose a CBT site when completing the online application to receive the registration and download procedures and instructions. Registration instructions will then be emailed to the address you provided on your bar examination application.

What email address will the notice for software download and registration be sent to?

The email address used for all examination related notices will be the email address you provided when you filed your bar examination application. Make sure it is an email address that you will have continuous access to until results are release.

When will I receive email notice that I can download and register the software?

You will receive notice approximately six weeks before the examination date.

What happens if I do not receive the email regarding the software download and registration?

The Board office will send out email notices to all applicants who have signed up to use CBT and who have not yet downloaded the software. These email notices will be sent once a week starting six weeks before the examination, until the date of the examination. If you do not receive any of these emails, check the following:

1. Ask your email service provider if they are blocking SPAM.
2. If you are using email client software, such as Outlook or Outlook Express, make sure you do not have a SPAM blocker enabled. If you do, you can add the following email address to the list of allowable email addresses:
 - webmaster@pabarexam.org
3. Ensure that you have provided the board office with a valid email address.
4. If you have not received your email notice by the time you receive your admission ticket for the examination (sent out approximately three weeks before the examination), contact the Board office for your user ID and password information.

How can I check to make sure I have registered successfully?

Once you register SofTest, you will be advised on-screen and via email that you have done so successfully. You may also access your registration status online at <http://www.examsoft.com/pabar>.

Can I still sign up for CBT after I have filed my bar application for the examination?

Seating limitations may apply at some examination sites which would prevent late registrations such as these. Guaranteed CBT use is only provided when you register during the initial filing of your bar examination application.

Do I have to register before the day of the examination?

Yes. If you have not registered prior to the Wednesday the week before the examination, you will be required to handwrite your answers for the entire essay portion of the examination. **Your CBT fee will not be refunded.**

Will my law school version of SofTest work for this examination?

No. You will need to download the Bar Edition of SofTest to use your laptop for the PT/essay portion of the examination.

PRE-EXAMINATION TESTING QUESTIONS

What is the Mock Exam?

The Mock Exam confirms your laptop is compatible with SofTest and enables users to familiarize

themselves with how to open, write and upload answer files *prior* to the day of the examination. The Mock Exam **must** be completed to ensure your computer has been configured properly for use on the day of the examination. Failure to do so may require you to handwrite your exam(s).

How do I get a copy of the Mock Exam?

Two copies of the Mock Exam will be automatically downloaded after you have registered your copy of SofTest. You will receive an email confirmation when the download has occurred along with instructions on how to complete the Mock Exam.

How will I know if my Mock Exam answer file was returned?

A visual 'progress status' (blue bar) is displayed as the upload takes place. When the upload is complete, a 'success' message is displayed. An email confirmation is then sent to your email address.

May I practice with the software?

Yes. There are two options. We **STRONGLY** urge you to take advantage of both.

Internet Delivered Mock Exam – Additional copies of the Mock Exam are available to familiarize you with SofTest. Internet connectivity is **only** required to download an additional copy of the exam file and upload the answer file. **NO** Internet connectivity is required while taking the exam. Instructions for downloading additional copies of the Mock Exam, taking it and uploading the answer file may be found at <http://www.examssoft.com/fsei>

Practice Exam Built into SofTest - After registering **SofTest**, launch the program by double-clicking the **SofTest** icon on your Windows Desktop and then click 'Launch SofTest.' When **SofTest** opens click the "Practice Exam" button (see **Figure 1**).

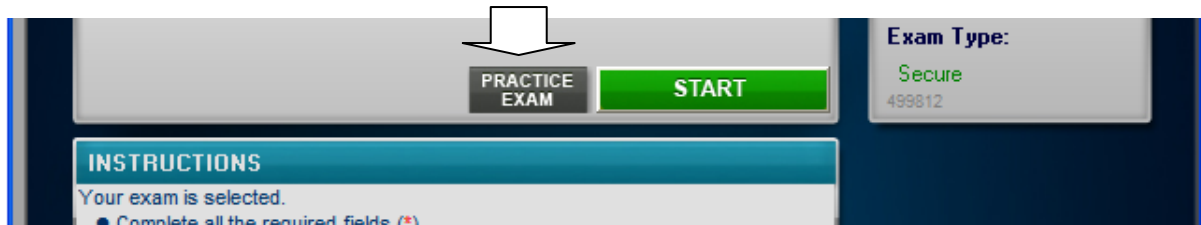


Figure 1

The "Practice Exam" allows you to familiarize yourself with the **SofTest** exam environment and word processing features. The Practice Exam *cannot* be saved and *no answer file* will be uploaded. You may use this Practice Exam as many times as you wish.

Can I have my computer checked prior to the bar examination?

No, the Board of Law Examiners will not provide a tech support session. It is your responsibility to contact ExamSoft with any technical problems.

EXAMINATION DAY PROCEDURES

Will technical help be available on the day of the examination?

Very Limited. Limited technical support will be available *ONLY* for exiting of the software on the day of the examination. ExamSoft provided technicians will be available to help with these issues, but they will not help with installing the software, registering your computer, or the start-up procedure at the beginning exam. It is your responsibility to ensure your laptop is in working order *PRIOR* to the examination.

What if I have not successfully downloaded the software and exam files by the examination date?

You will **NOT** be able to test with your laptop computer if you do not successfully download and register the software *PRIOR* to the date of the exam. You will be required to handwrite the exam. Proctors will issue the appropriate answer books. You will remain in your assigned seat and section.

Will power be provided at the exam site?

Yes. Power is provided at all sites for CBT applicants. However, it is recommended that all laptops can function on battery power for at least 1 hour in the event of power loss.

Will the essay questions appear on my screen at the time of the examination?

No. All essay examination questions are provided in a paper booklet, which is distributed to each applicant (CBT and handwriters) by proctors on the day of the examination. They will not be included in your downloaded examination answer files.

Can I take the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) on my laptop?

No. The MBE is a national test and is only available in paper format.

Can I take my laptop out of the testing room over the lunch break?

No. Your laptop must remain in the testing area the entire length of the examination (from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.). If you should finish the exam early, you may leave the area, but your laptop must remain until the completion of the exam. You must return to the testing area after the examination has finished at 4:30 p.m.

POST-EXAMINATION PROCEDURES**Will there be Internet connectivity at the test site?**

Internet connectivity is not provided by the Board of Law Examiners at any test site. It is your responsibility to find an Internet connection (hotel, Internet Café's, wireless hotspots, etc.) and upload your answer files by 11 p.m., the Tuesday of the exam. However, if you ARE able to establish an Internet connection at the test site, there is no penalty for uploading the answers immediately following any testing session.

When do I have to upload my examination answers?

You will have until **11:00 p.m.** on Tuesday to upload your answer files.

How long does this upload take?

The upload process should take only a few minutes depending on your Internet connection speed, and your computer.

Should I call the Board office after the examination to check on the printing of my answers?

No. A Board staff member will contact you either by phone or email if a problem with your upload and/or printing has occurred.

How will I know my answer files have been uploaded?

A visual 'progress status' (blue bar) is displayed as the upload takes place. When the upload is complete, a 'success' message is displayed. Two separate email confirmations (AM and PM) are sent to the email address provided when you signed up on ExamSoft's website.

What if I have problems or questions with the software or uploading?

Begin by visiting ExamSoft's Frequently Asked Questions web page located at www.examsoft.com/barfaq. Technical support from ExamSoft will also be available to you via email at support@examsoft.com or by phone toll-free at 866-429-8889.

REGISTRATION CHECKLIST FOR LAPTOP USERS

The following checklist is provided as a convenience for applicants to ensure they have met the adequate requirements for CBT. The items on this checklist must be completed prior to the date of the bar examination if you wish to use your laptop for CBT.

- Obtain a Fully Qualified Laptop** – Ensure that you have access to a fully qualified laptop as defined in the *Laptop and Technical Questions* section of the *Frequently Asked Questions* (Page 2). You must be able to have access to this laptop until results are released for the examination. You will only be allowed to download the software to this one laptop. For this reason, please make sure your computer is in optimum operating condition before arriving at the examination. The following procedures will help to prevent common examination day problems:
 - Disable all screensavers and power saving features
 - Ensure that the date and time are correct on your laptop
 - Test your laptop with the SofTest Practice and Mock Exams as much as possible PRIOR to arriving at the examination site.
- Sign Up For CBT With The Board Office** – During the filing of your application to sit for the Pennsylvania Bar Examination, you must indicate that you wish to take the PT/essay portion of the examination on laptop. After your application is submitted, you will receive email notification approximately six weeks before the examination with further instructions.
- Register** – Once you have received your email confirmation, visit www.examsoft.com/pabar, and click the Exam Takers Tab. Use your applicant ID number and password (the last 4 digits of your social security number) from the email to log into the site.
- Install** – Read the instructions on the screen to download and install SofTest on your laptop.
- Complete Registration** – Enter your applicant ID number and password into SofTest when prompted to register.
- Download Exam(s)** – Formatted exam files for recording your answer are automatically downloaded after successfully registering SofTest.
- Take Mock Exam** - Complete two Mock Exams and upload the answer files
- Review FlexSite Exam Information** – Upon completion of SofTest registration you will be provided information about using your laptop on the day of the examination.
- Equipment** - You will be required to access the Internet following the examination to upload your answers. Make certain your computer is properly equipped.

NOTE: Following the end of the PT/essay examination, you will be required to upload your two answer files to a secure server.

These procedures must be completed each time you sit for the bar examination, regardless of any previous ExamSoft registrations you may have completed for this bar examination or any other examination.

Applicants who have not registered SofTest and downloaded their exam files will not be allowed to use their laptop computer for that examination and will be required to handwrite their answers.

INFORMATIVE PROMPTS FOR AM SESSION OF ESSAY EXAMINATION

The following prompts will be displayed after you open your AM answer file and reboot your system on the day of the examination.

Notice 1

I understand that I am not required to use a computer to take this examination and that I may handwrite my answers. In NO EVENT will I hold the Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners or ExamSoft Worldwide Inc., their partners, staff, employees, officers, directors, or affiliates liable to me for any and all damages arising from the use of this software, including any loss of my examination answers or any effect it may have on my examination score. I understand that I have a duty to ensure my computer is in proper working condition before the examination and that I followed all installation instructions.

I accept the foregoing by clicking OK at the bottom of this screen

Notice 2

SofTest will save and back up your work EVERY minute. SofTest will BLOCK access to all other applications on your computer. SofTest will AUTOMATICALLY format all margins, line spacing, appropriate headings and page numbers. Your examination questions are printed in the booklet you received from the examination proctor – you WILL NOT see the examination questions on the SofTest screen. Use the arrow keys at the top of the SofTest screen to navigate through the examination questions.

Notice 3

The ExamSoft file you are using has been formatted for a total of three (3) questions, the Performance Test (PT) and essay questions #1 and #2. Please answer each question and all its corresponding parts in the appropriately numbered SofTest window. Use the arrow keys to navigate among the SofTest question windows.

Notice 4

DO NOT TURN OFF your computer without an ExamSoft Site Engineer present. If your computer malfunctions, place it in the top corner of your table area and leave the power on. Notify a proctor immediately, and you will be provided answer books to handwrite the remainder of the PT/essay examination. Your answers will be collected by a technician following the completion of the session. Your work should be safely stored in an encrypted format on your computer's hard drive.

Notice 5

When you have completed the PT and AM essay questions, you will be required to reboot your system. After your computer has rebooted, you will see a prompt to upload your examination answer files. You may NOT upload your answer files until after the examination.

DO NOT reformat your computer's hard drive until after results are released.

INFORMATIVE PROMPTS FOR PM SESSION OF ESSAY EXAMINATION

The following prompts will be displayed after you open your PM answer file and reboot your system on the day of the examination.

Notice 1

I understand that I am not required to use a computer to take this examination and that I may handwrite my answers. In NO EVENT will I hold the Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners or ExamSoft Worldwide Inc., their partners, staff, employees, officers, directors, or affiliates liable to me for any and all damages arising from the use of this software, including any loss of my examination answers or any effect it may have on my examination score. I understand that I have a duty to ensure my computer is in proper working condition before the examination and that I followed all installation instructions.

I accept the foregoing by clicking OK at the bottom of this screen

Notice 2

SofTest will save and back up your work EVERY minute. SofTest will BLOCK access to all other applications on your computer. SofTest will AUTOMATICALLY format all margins, line spacing, appropriate headings and page numbers. Your examination questions are printed in the booklet you received from the examination proctor – you WILL NOT see the examination questions on the SofTest screen. Use the arrow keys at the top of the SofTest screen to navigate through the examination questions.

Notice 3

The ExamSoft file you are using has been formatted for a total of four (4) essay questions, essay questions #3, #4, #5 and #6. Please answer each question and all its corresponding parts in the appropriately numbered SofTest window. Use the arrow keys to navigate among the SofTest question windows.

Notice 4

DO NOT TURN OFF your computer without an ExamSoft Site Engineer present. If your computer malfunctions, place it in the top corner of your table area and leave the power on. Notify a proctor immediately, and you will be provided answer books to handwrite the remainder of the PT/essay examination. Your answers will be collected by a technician following the completion of the session. Your work should be safely stored in an encrypted format on your computer's hard drive.

Notice 5

When you have completed the PM essay questions, you will be required to reboot your system. After your computer has rebooted, you will see a prompt to upload your examination answer files. You may NOT upload your answer files until after the examination.

DO NOT reformat your computer's hard drive until after results are released.