

February 2021 Pennsylvania Bar Exam Frequently Asked Questions

This page will be updated as additional information becomes available. Return to this page and monitor your message center on www.pabarapplication.org for updates.

Does the remote bar exam test the same content as the in-person exam?

The subject matter tested on the remote bar examination will be the same as the content covered on an in-person exam. For more information review https://www.pabarexam.org/bar_exam_information/testsubjects.htm

What is the exam format and schedule?

- The exam will consist of a performance test, six essay questions, and 200 multiple-choice Multistate Bar Exam (MBE) questions administered over a three-day period for applicants testing under standard conditions.
- Applicants must make a good faith effort on each question on the exam. Only applicants seeking admission in Pennsylvania may sit for the exam. Applicants may not take portions of the exam.
- The examination is closed book. Applicants may not access notes, study aids, or any other type of assistance during the exam. Study aids may not be present in the exam room.
- The exam will be on February 22, 23, and 24, 2021.
 - On Monday, February 22, the Board will administer two test sessions. The first will include the performance test. Applicants will have a total of 105 minutes to answer the question. The second session will include two essay questions. Applicants will receive a total of 90 minutes to answer both essay questions in the session. Applicants must provide their answers to each essay question in a separate screen.
 - On Tuesday, February 23, the Board will administer two test sessions. Each session will include two essay questions and applicants will have a total of 90 minutes to complete both questions in the session. Applicants must provide their answers to each essay question in a separate screen.
 - On Wednesday, February 24, the Board will administer the MBE portion of the exam. There will be 200 MBE questions. Applicants may navigate back and forth between questions during each session. The number of sessions and the time of each are the prerogative of NCBE.
 - During the performance test ONLY -- Applicants may take one bathroom break of up to five minutes during this test session, if necessary.
- The Board will post the testing schedule as soon as it is available. Each session will require a separate password to begin.
- The schedules for applicants testing with accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act will vary from the standard schedule. Board staff will communicate specific test schedules for applicants approved for accommodations.
- All times communicated by the Board will be Eastern Time (ET). Applicants taking the exam in other time zones must adhere to the Board-issued schedule regardless of their local time (e.g., a session scheduled to start at 10 a.m. must be started at 9 a.m. Central Time).

- At the start of each session, applicants will access a password for the session and complete the login process. Both of these actions will require an internet connection. Only upon successfully advancing to the question content, when internet access will be blocked by the software, will the timer set for the session begin to countdown.

What is the cut score? Will there be a regrade process?

- The required score to pass is a 272. The Board will follow its usual procedures with regard to scaling, as the NCBE will be equating, grading and scaling the MBE. The Board will grade and scale the total of the six answers to the essay examination and the performance test (valued at 1.5 times an essay question) to the scaled 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 Board will combine the scaled scores of the PT/essay examination and MBE to determine if an applicant has attained a scaled score of 272 or higher. Out of an abundance of caution, the Board will expand the pool of answers below the pass line to receive a second review. All applicants receiving a combined score of 262-271 will be included in a re-read process and have their PT and six essay answers re-read and re-graded by a different grader. The re-read graders are not aware of the scores originally given. Through this process, examiners will determine a final grade. Pursuant to Pa. B.A.R. [221](#), the grading of the bar examination answers is final and is not subject to judicial review.

What are the computer requirements for the remote exam?

- o Applicants must download and use ExamSoft's Exemplify software with ExamID and ExamMonitor to take all portions of the exam.
- Applicants must take the examination on a computer that meets the ExamSoft's minimum system requirements specified for Exemplify software with ExamID and Exam Monitor enabled and use a functional webcam and microphone during testing.
- o Applicants will find information about the minimum system requirements (MSR's) at –
 - o Mac: <https://examsoft.com/resources/exemplify-minimum-system-requirements#mac>
 - o Windows: <https://examsoft.com/resources/exemplify-minimum-system-requirements#windows>
 - As of November 16, 2020, the Exemplify MSR's have been updated with higher requirements for hard drive space and internet speed.
- Applicants for the February 2021 bar exam should NOT plan to use a new Mac device with the M1 microchip for the exam, as Exemplify only runs on Mac devices with Intel processors.
 - o M1 Announcement: <https://www.apple.com/newsroom/2020/11/introducing-the-next-generation-of-mac/>
 - o Comparison of Mac Models (Includes Those With Intel Chips): <https://www.apple.com/mac/compare/>
- Applicants may not use more than one computer monitor to take the exam.
- Applicants will need some internet connectivity at the start of each session to retrieve the password for that session's file and upload their photo. A high-speed internet connection is not required. Applicants will not need internet connectivity during the session while the exam file is in use.
- Applicants will need internet connectivity after the exam to upload the completed exam file answers and the audio/video files. The Board does not require that applicants upload the files immediately after each session. The software will automatically suspend and resume the upload

process as needed, even if the applicant has multiple files queued to be uploaded. Applicants must upload the files each test day by 11:00 p.m., unless a technical problem prevents them from doing so. In the case of a technical problem, all files are due by 11 p.m. on February 26.

- Applicants may use external standard or ergonomic keyboards and equipment such as a mouse. These items may be wireless. Applicants will likely find that a mouse with a wheel is useful for scrolling through the question.

What are the features of the Exemplify software?

- Exemplify utilizes a component called ExamID to collect your photo through your computer's webcam. Examsoft will use facial recognition to compare this picture with your baseline photo at the start of each exam session to verify your identity.
- Exemplify utilizes a component called ExamMonitor that will use your camera and microphone to record you as you take the exam. After the exam, Examsoft will use artificial intelligence and human proctors to conduct a preliminary review of the audio/video files. ExamSoft will subsequently provide the files to the Board for review.
- Regarding the performance test and essays-
 - Applicants will have virtual scratch paper by using a "notes" area of the software. Applicants will be able to copy and paste text between the notes and answer sections. Any information applicants write in the notes area will not be recorded as part of an answer or graded.
 - Physical scratch paper will be permitted ONLY for the performance test. Applicants who wish to use this may have up to four pages of paper at their desk. Applicants using physical scratch paper must show the front and back of the pages to the camera and demonstrate that they are blank at the start of the session. Physical scratch paper is not permitted for any other session.
 - Spell check will be enabled.
 - No content can be printed.
 - Applicants will be able to access a mock exam to gain familiarity with the software features.
- MBE
 - Applicants will have virtual scratch paper by using a "notes" area of the software.
 - Applicants will be able to strike through answers that they believe to be incorrect, but must affirmatively indicate the answer they wish to select. Merely leaving a single un-struck choice will not suffice as an answer.
 - Applicants will be able to skip or flag questions to return to them later within a session. Once the session is over, applicants will not be able to revisit that session's questions.
 - The Board will include sample multiple-choice questions as part of a mock exam so that applicants can practice with these features.
- When the applicant advances to the text of the exam questions, the automated Exemplify timer will begin counting down, marking the duration of the exam. The exam session ends when the applicant exits the exam file or when the Exemplify timer reaches zero, automatically exiting the exam file. The timer will show a seconds indicator when there are five minutes remaining in session.

- Within the exam file, applicants will be able to set a timed reminder in addition to the automated timer.

Who will have access to my photo and the videos of me testing and for how long?

- The collection of biometric information through ExamID and ExamMonitor is governed by ExamSoft's privacy policy, available at <https://examsoft.com/privacy-policy>. ExamSoft's proctoring partners are bound by this policy as well. The information is used only for the purpose of providing the services described above to clients, is never sold, and in the case of the remote bar exam will be retained only until the Board specifies it no longer needs the files. Files available to human proctors are anonymized and no information about the identity of the applicants is available to the proctor.
- Applicants will find ExamSoft's terms of use here. <https://examsoft.com/terms-of-use>

How will I know when to download the software and how do I check that it works?

- The Board office will message applicants through the Online Bar Application (www.pabarapplication.org) when the software is available for installation.
- Applicants must install and register Examplify on the computer that they will use to take the exam.
- After installation, applicants will take two mandatory mock exams. If possible, applicants should take the mock exam in the same environment and conditions in which they will take the actual exam.

Where may I take the exam?

- Applicants may take the remote exam at their home, law school, a library, or another location of their choice. Applicants will need a quiet room with internet access where they can be alone and uninterrupted during the exam. There should be no personally identifying information in the background.

When will results be available?

- The Board of Law Examiners expects to release results by mid-April 2021.