

# 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](http://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](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?

- Applicants must download and use ExamSoft's Examplify 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 Examplify software with ExamID and Exam Monitor enabled and use a functional webcam and microphone during testing.
- Applicants will find information about the minimum system requirements at –
  - o Mac: <https://examsoft.com/resources/examplify-minimum-system-requirements#mac>
  - o Windows: <https://examsoft.com/resources/examplify-minimum-system-requirements#windows>
- Applicants for the February 2021 bar exam should NOT plan to use a new Mac device with the M1 microchip for the exam, as Examplify 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](http://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.

## **Testing Conditions for Remote Bar Exam – February 22-24, 2021**

The Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners is administering the February 2021 bar exam remotely using the Examplify® software from ExamSoft Worldwide, Inc. (ExamSoft), including the ExamID and ExamMonitor capabilities (software). By downloading the software, an applicant agrees to abide by the testing conditions below and consents to the use of Examplify, ExamID, and ExamMonitor and the processing of data associated with these services.

### **Exam Format**

- 1) Applicants must take the examination on a computer with a functional webcam and microphone.
- 2) Applicants must register, install, and certify the required exam software by the deadline designated on a computer that meets the minimum system requirements specified by ExamSoft.
- 3) Applicants must take and upload two mock exams and download the exam files by the deadline designated.
- 4) Other than when taking the performance test, applicants testing under standard conditions will test in 90-minute modules.
- 5) Applicants must be alone in the room where they are taking the exam. Except for a technology issue that requires a phone call to solve, applicants may not communicate with anyone during the exam. Applicants may not talk to themselves, other people or pets while testing. Applicants also may not read the questions aloud.
- 6) Applicants must login and begin the exam according to the Board's standard time schedule, unless the Board approved test accommodations, in which case the applicant must adhere to the approved accommodations schedule.
- 7) Applicants may leave camera view to take one break of up to five minutes during the performance test, if necessary. No other action by the applicant is necessary. Applicants must not close down their computer during this time. Breaks are not permitted during any other session.
- 8) With the sole exception of the bathroom break permitted during the performance test, applicants may not leave the view of their webcam during each testing session. If an applicant finishes early, the applicant must exit the software before leaving the view of the camera.
- 9) During the performance test ONLY, applicants may have up to four pages of scratch paper. Applicants using physical scratch paper must show the front and back of the pages to the camera and demonstrate that the pages have no writing on them (lined paper is permitted) at the start of the session. Physical scratch paper is not permitted for any other session.
- 10) At the start time for each posted module, the password for that test session will be available. Applicants must retrieve the password, log into the exam file, have their photo taken, advance to the question content and begin testing.
- 11) Applicants must upload their answers from each test session and the exam monitor files (audio/video) by the established deadlines.
- 12) A mechanical failure or malfunction of an applicant's computer, any other equipment, loss of power or inability to access the internet during the administration of the examination will not be grounds for any reconsideration or modification of an applicant's score.
- 13) Lumbar support or a seat cushion is permitted.
- 14) The use of tissues is permitted.

The following are prohibited on the desktop or within arm's reach during the exam:

- 1) Highlighters, pens, pencils, book holders or stands, except that applicants may use a pen (non-digital) or pencil during the performance test to take notes.
- 2) Food, drinks, and medication, unless an applicant has a medical condition for which the board has approved accommodations.
- 3) Bags, purses, backpacks, briefcases, or computer cases.
- 4) Any written material (other than the permitted scratch paper for the performance test) or any digital, programmable, Bluetooth/Internet capable or electronic device with the exception of the registered computer & associated mouse/keyboard (e.g. media players, tablet computers, timers).

**The following are prohibited in the exam room:**

- 5) Music or white noise. All radios, stereos or other devices/equipment that will make audible sounds must be turned off at all times during the exam.
- 6) Notes, study aids, or exam resources.
- 7) A mobile phone. If a technology issue occurs, an applicant may retrieve the phone and must use it in front of their computer. After a call for technology assistance, be sure the phone is set to silent and remove it from arms' reach. Remove it from the room after the session.

The following actions are prohibited during testing:

- 8) Wearing a headset, headphones of any kind, earplugs, ear muffs, hats, or anything that covers the head or ears. Applicants who wear headwear for religious reasons must notify the board in advance of the exam.
- 9) Wearing a watch of any kind or a fitness tracker.
- 10) Smoking, vaping, chewing gum, eating, applying lip balm, using eye drops or keeping your mouth covered.
- 11) Making any attempt to bypass or avoid the remote proctoring mechanisms.
- 12) Giving, receiving, or seeking assistance or information while taking the exam with the exception of seeking assistance from ExamSoft or Board staff.
- 13) Using unauthorized aids.
- 14) Using any camera or recording device in the exam room other than the registered computer.

The Board will review audio/video exam files irregularities, including but not exclusive to: the absence of the applicant, voices, the presence of another person, and the presence of prohibited items. An applicant who is found to have violated or attempted to violate any rule or restriction established by the Board related to taking the bar examination may be disqualified from the examination per PA Bar Admission Rule 206(b). Applicants will be automatically disqualified if they are found to be cheating, as described in PA Bar Admission Rule 206(a).

## Frequently Asked Questions for Bar Applicants

### **What are Minimum System requirements for Windows and Mac devices?**

Examplify can be used on most modern computers purchased within the last few years. Currently, only Mac computers and Windows PCs are supported for Bar exams. Examplify will not run on Chrome, Android, or Linux operating systems. For remote exams with ExamID and ExamMonitor, a webcam and microphone that do not use virtual software to operate are required.

**Windows:** <https://examsoft.com/resources/examplify-minimum-system-requirements#windows>

**Mac OS:** <https://examsoft.com/resources/examplify-minimum-system-requirements#mac>

Apple has announced that hardware releases due later this year will utilize Apple silicon microprocessors. If released prior to the October Bar Exams, these specific Apple devices will not be supported by Examplify.

You can verify whether your device meets the minimum standard requirements when you complete the mandatory mock exams.

### **May I use my iPad or tablet to take the remote exam?**

No, remotely proctored exams are NOT currently supported for iPad, Surface Pro or other tablets.

### **What if my computer comes with a Virtual Camera or Virtual Camera Software installed to operate the installed camera on the device?**

ExamSoft does NOT support any Virtual Camera or Virtual Camera Software in any manner on any device.

### **Can I use an external camera and microphone?**

An external camera and microphone may be used if your device is not equipped with those items as long as it is not powered by virtual software. We recommend the use of built-in devices to prevent the accident disconnection of external device during the exam or the incorrect device selection during the setup process.

### **Do I need an internet connection during the exam?**

An internet connection is required prior to the download exam files, which is done prior to exam day. On the day of the exam, you will also need internet access for a short time at the start of each exam session to obtain the exam password and once Examplify is launched, to take your identity verification photo. Once the photo step is complete, Examplify will lock down your device and block access to the internet. Once you have completed your exams, and internet access is restored, the upload of the answer and video monitoring files will begin.

### **Do I need high speed internet to upload the exam and monitor files?**

The minimum requirements for internet speed are 2Mbps. The faster the internet speed,

the faster the exam answer and monitoring files will upload. The monitoring file for a 90-minute exam session at a minimal speed should generally take around 15 minutes. Of course, if you have faster internet speed, the uploads will not take as long.

**What is ExamSoft's policy regarding collection of my data, including biometric data?**

The collection of biometric information through ExamID and ExamMonitor is governed by our privacy policy, available at <https://examsoft.com/privacy-policy>. Our proctoring partners are bound by this policy as well. Before any biometric information is collected from an applicant, the applicant is notified and must consent. The information is used only for the purpose of providing the services, is never sold, and retained as long as required to provide services, so long as the client's account is maintained. Monitoring files sent to our proctoring partners are anonymized so that the applicant's identity is unknown to the proctor.

**Do I need to disable my antivirus software to download Exemplify?**

Exemplify is a desktop application used by over a million exam takers annually around the world, with updates released at different times throughout the year. Globally, there are hundreds of different anti-virus solutions, each of which releases frequent updates. In this evolving, dynamic environment, there is always risk that a specific anti-virus software could prevent Exemplify from successfully operating as needed to deliver a secure exam.

To secure the device, Exemplify closes most external applications when beginning a Secure exam. In order to provide a stable and secure user experience, the following commonly used Anti-Virus applications have been confirmed to have no known conflicts with Exemplify, and are thus excluded from being automatically shut down at exam start.

- Ad-Aware anti-virus
- Avast anti-virus
- AVG anti-virus
- AVG Watch Dog anti-virus
- Avira anti-virus
- BitDefender anti-virus
- ESET anti-virus
- Kaspersky anti-virus
- McAfee anti-virus
- McAfee anti-virus
- Microsoft Anti-Malware Service
- Microsoft Defender anti-virus
- Microsoft Security Essentials
- Norton anti-virus
- Norton 360
- Panda anti-virus
- Quick Heal anti-virus
- WebRoot anti-virus

While these vendors' product implementations cause no known issues with Exemplify operations, as these vendors are constantly updating their software, there is always risk that an update to any anti-virus solution could prevent Exemplify from working effectively.

For this reason, we recommend that users stop their anti-virus prior to starting a secure exam and turning it back on once the exam is completed. If a user is uncomfortable shutting off anti-virus and is using one of the anti-virus solutions listed above, ExamSoft recommends that the user take a secure mock exam prior to any high-stakes assessment to verify that there are no conflicts between Exemplify and the anti-virus software.



Any anti-virus applications not listed above will be automatically disabled when a secure exam begins. For users with anti-virus applications that are not included in this list, ExamSoft recommends restarting anti-virus upon exam completion, and/or migrating to one of the anti-virus solutions listed above.

**Will proctors reviewing the monitoring videos have access to my personal information?**

The encrypted video files sent to our proctoring partners do not include identifying information about you. You should ensure on exam day that no such information is visible in the background so that this information is not inadvertently available. Each proctor completes a rigorous background check and participates in hours of training, certification, peer reviews and auditing. Additionally, they are trained to be neutral and objective in feedback.