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How long is the bar exam

Studying For The Bar? 10% OFF Quimbee Bar Review In the video above, John (from the Test Prep Insight team) walks you through everything you need to know about the length of different states' bar exams. Of course, you can always keep reading for more details. How Many Hours is the Bar Exam? In most states, the bar exam is a 12-hour test that is broken down into two days of testing. On the first day, you will take the Multistate Essay Exam (MEE) and the Multistate Performance Test (MPT). On the second day, you will be taking the Multistate Bar Exam (MBE). The overall test has both essay and multiple-choice questions, so it is important to plan carefully so you have plenty of time for each type of question. The two-day timeframe is a general window that you can expect for nearly every state. However, there are exceptions to this. If you live in Louisiana, plan to dedicate 21 hours over the course of three days to earning your law license. In the past, California also had a 3-day testing timeframe, but has recently changed it and is now more in line with most of the country. It is important to take note that some states have a jurisdiction-specific test in addition to the 2-day, 12-hour bar exam. Be sure to check your jurisdiction's information to see if there are additional components required. How Long is Each Section of the Bar Exam? While the bar exam will take you at least 12 hours to complete, it is divided into three tests. The first day of testing is always on a Tuesday and consists of the Multistate Essay Exam (MEE) and the Multistate Performance Test (MPT). On the second day, you'll tackle the big test, the Multistate Bar Exam (MEE). You'll start day one with the MPT. You are allowed three hours to complete the two given assignments. For the first one, you will have either an email or a memo asking you to prepare a response to a specific situation using an area of law. You will respond as if sending a letter, contract, or email to a client. You will have access to the needed information, such as files and a library, and you will be asked to give a thorough response in the allotted 90 minutes per assignment. While splitting your time 50/50—using the first 45 minutes for reading and research and the second 45 minutes for answering the question—is the recommended approach according to the American Bar Association, you can break your time up and use it however you see fit. It is best to try and leave yourself a few minutes at the end of the testing period for a quick read-through and the possible editing of your responses. When you return from your lunch break on the first day, you will be taking on the MEE. This test will take up the remaining three hours of your day. The Multistate Essay Exam has six essay questions for you to answer. Your test administrator will pass out packets that contain all of the questions so time management is in your hands. You will need to complete each question within 30 minutes to stay on track to finish on time. It is recommended that, while preparing for the bar exam in the weeks leading up to the test, you practice with MEEs from past years. You can also browse past questions and answers for some ideas on how to respond to the essay prompts. When day two comes around, it's time to tackle the MBE. This is the big multiple-choice test that contains questions pertaining to many different aspects of law. This test has 200 questions overall, covering a wide range of subjects such as constitutional law, contracts, and civil procedure. Since this massive test is multiple choice and it is broken down into two sets of questions, it is a bit easier to handle. You will have 6 hours to complete the Multistate Bar Exam. It is broken down into two 3-hour blocks. Before lunch, you will complete the first 100 questions. After you return from lunch, you'll finish the rest of the test. You will notice that some of the questions on the MBE take longer than others, so it may be hard to keep track of your progress. As long as you find yourself completing 15 questions every 30 minutes, you should be on course to finishing on time. How Many Breaks do You Get During the Bar Exam? During the bar exam, there is only one official break, and that is your one-hour lunch break. However, that does not mean you are stuck at your seat the entire time. Getting up and stepping away from the testing area is allowed and will keep you from becoming too burnt out or stressed. If you are making good time, you should definitely give yourself breaks. Standing up and stepping away from your seat is a great way to keep your stress levels as low as possible on such important days. You can take this time to stretch your legs, go to the bathroom, get a drink, and have a snack so you can keep your energy level up. If you just can't bring yourself to leave your seat, at least set your pencil down, close your eyes, and think of something that isn't law-related. Maintaining mental calm and focus is crucial, and although it may not feel like you have two minutes to spare, those 120 seconds could save you valuable time on the back end through increased productivity. As far as your lunch break goes, pay attention to the restaurants that are nearby. Make sure you have a few ideas in mind in case one of the establishments is busy or not open. Many people choose to pack a lunch and bring it with them. You can also order room service to your room at the hotel. How Long is the New York Bar Exam? The New York Bar Exam, like most others in the United States, is a 12-hour test split up into two days of testing. On the first day, examinees will take their two 90-minute Multistate Performance Test questions in the morning and then complete the six Multistate Essay Exam Questions in the afternoon. On day two, the Multistate Bar Exam is administered. It is a 200-question test containing all multiple-choice questions. New York is one of the states that administers a state-specific test in addition to the 2-day, 12-hour bar exam. Candidates must first complete the New York Law Course (NYLC), which is an on demand, online course of approximately 17 hours of instruction relating specifically to New York law. After completing the NYLC, examinees must pass the New York Law Exam (NYLE), which is a 2-hour online test containing 50 multiple-choice questions covering material in the NYLC. ➔ Next: Best Bar Review Courses The Bar - the phrase commonly used to refer to the barrister profession - is becoming increasingly diverse, encouraging the best and the brightest to join, irrespective of background. Understand the basics: what a barrister is, what they do and more about the legal sector. Discover the three stages you must complete to become a barrister: academic, vocational and pupillage. Start your journey to becoming a barrister with our detailed pages. Barristers are independent specialist legal advisers and advocates who help individuals and organisations understand, pursue and defend their legal rights. They're probably best known for wearing wigs and gowns and presenting legal arguments in court. But there is much more than that to a career at the Bar. Some will not appear in court regularly and, in many courts, you don't have to wear wigs and gowns anymore. Barristers specialise in one or more areas of law (known as practice areas) and have in-depth knowledge, skills and expertise. As a barrister, you might be: Offering legal advice and opinion Arguing a case Examining or cross-examining (questioning in court) witnesses and experts Researching the law and preparing legal arguments Where do barristers work? Most barristers are self-employed (work for themselves) and they group together in offices known as 'chambers' where they pay 'rent' to cover building and staff costs. Around a fifth of the Bar are employed barristers who work for an organisation like the government, banks or the military. What's the difference between barristers and solicitors? In England and Wales, the legal profession is divided into two main groups: barristers and solicitors. Their work can often overlap as both offer legal advice and they represent and defend people and organisations. Most solicitors work at a law firm but some work at organisations, such as the government. Their work can range across a variety of practice areas. Some solicitors can transfer to the Bar and qualify as barristers if you get approval from the Bar Standards Board and sit a Bar transfer test. Solicitors are often approached by a client (a member of the public or organisation) first. Usually, the solicitor then approaches a barrister to represent their client - this is known as instructing a barrister. The barrister will then provide specialist advice on the area of law they practice in and advocate on the client's behalf. You can find out more about becoming a solicitor on the Law Society's website. Other careers in the legal sector Although barristers and solicitors are the two main groups, there are a variety of other careers in the legal sector including chartered legal executives, court legal advisers, paralegals, coroners and more. Head over to the National Careers Service to find out more about these and other legal careers. You'll begin your journey by doing a degree. You'll need two to three A Levels or the equivalent to go to university. The grades you'll need depend on the university course's requirements. You can either study a degree in law (often referred to as an LLB) or any subject plus a conversion course. This is a graduate diploma in law (GDL) and can be done full or part-time. Alternatively, you can do a joint GDL and master of laws course. Stage two: vocational 1 to 2 years Next you will have to apply for a Bar training course (also referred to as Bar vocational studies or Bar professional training course). This is a postgraduate course which can be completed full or part-time. Have a look at the List of Authorised Education and Training Organisations that provide Bar training. The 4 Inns of Court (Lincoln's, Inner, Middle and Gray's) offer scholarship opportunities for all students expecting to start the course - find out more about funding and scholarships. Stage three: pupillage 1 year to 18 months This is the final stage of your journey to becoming a member of the Bar. Pupillage is the work-based stage - like a paid apprenticeship - which is split into your 'first six' and 'second six', your non-practising and your practising period. Pupillage can be completed in chambers or at an organisation like the Crown Prosecution Service. You then apply for tenancy in chambers as a self-employed barrister or for a permanent position with an organisation as an employed barrister. We've detailed the steps for you on these pages so you'll find out how to become a barrister from whichever stage you're at. Look at what you need to pursue a career in law, find opportunities and see our top tips Learn more about the Bar training course and being 'called to the Bar', find opportunities across the Bar and see our top tips Discover what pupillage is and how to find it, with some tips and resources to help you along the way Explore the resources we've compiled to guide and support you through this final stage This brochure introduces you to life as a barrister - one of the most dynamic and challenging careers available Written by the our young barristers' committee (YBC) , this guide offers answers to your questions and signposts to a vast array of resources Tips, resources and support for coming back to the Bar and switching practice area or moving between the employed and self-employed Bars The Bar Council's activities, events, opportunities and resources promoting careers at the Bar are supported by The Council of the Inns of Court. Admission to the bar is conducted via the Board of Bar Examiners of the state in which you are applying. While the admission process may vary significantly from state to state, the process usually involves: Applying to sit for the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE) and taking the MPRE; Applying to sit for the bar exam and taking the bar exam; and Completing your state's character and fitness process and any additional admission prerequisites. LL.M. students should make sure that they are eligible to take that state's bar exam and file the requisite evaluation request (such as the Online Foreign Evaluation required by the New York State Board of Law Examiners) and required documentation well in advance of the applicable bar exam date. Students seeking information about bar exam eligibility based on foreign legal education may wish to consult NCBE Chart 4. Because procedures vary by state, you will not typically receive emails from HLS about upcoming deadlines, but there are a number of resources available to help you navigate the process. Here is a quick overview chart of relevant resources and offices at HLS. Begin your search by visiting the NCBE's Comprehensive Guide to Bar Admission Requirements, which contains information about deadlines and requirements for different jurisdictions. It is important that you routinely check your state's bar admission page, as deadlines and requirements may change throughout the year and state committees are not flexible about waiving requirements. Each year the Dean of Students Office co-sponsors a number of information sessions on the bar exam that cover both the application process and character & fitness processes. Speakers generally include representatives from the Massachusetts Board of Bar Examiners, Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers, and some of the major bar preparation companies. The Dean of Students Office hosts information sessions on the top six bar exam jurisdictions for HLS students. Important dates and deadlines of those jurisdictions and the MPRE are also provided. View Upcoming Events, Application Dates, and Deadlines The Dean of Students Office has created a video series discussing the bar exam, an overview of the application process, the MPRE, and many other bar-related topics. New videos will be added as they are completed. View the Bar Exam Video Series The bar exam is offered twice per year - once in February and once in July. It is generally a two-day examination, although it lasts three days in some jurisdictions. There are two types of bar exams: UBE (Uniform Bar Examination) and non-UBE. UBE exams are always the last Tuesday and Wednesday of February and July. Most non-UBE jurisdictions follow the UBE's schedule. Though the format varies by jurisdiction, components may include: MBE: The Multistate Bar Examination (MBE), a six-hour, two-hundred question multiple-choice examination covering civil procedure, contracts, torts, constitutional law, criminal law and procedure, evidence, and real property. MPT: The Multistate Performance Test (MPT), two 90-minute skills questions covering factual analysis, legal analysis and reasoning, problem solving, identification and resolution of ethical dilemmas, written communication, and organization and management of a legal task. MEE: The Multistate Essay Examination (MEE), a three-hour, six-question essay examination covering the following areas of law: business associations, civil procedure, conflict of laws, constitutional law, contracts, criminal law and procedure, evidence, family law, real property, secured transactions, torts, and trusts and estates. State-specific multiple choice and essays: Check with your local state bar. UBE: The UBE is a two-day exam composed of the MBE, MPT and MEE. The MEE and MPT are taken on the first day, and the MBE on the second day. Commercial Bar Preparation Courses Most law graduates take a commercial bar preparation course beginning in late May. If you are working for a law firm, your employer may cover the costs, so you should ask your firm how to handle costs and make sure to keep receipts for reimbursement purposes. If you are pursuing a career outside of the private sector with lower pay, you may want to inquire with the bar courses about scholarships or about the possibility of working as a representative for the company to receive a discounted course. Some bar courses allow students who will be working at a law firm to "sponsor" public-interest students for the full cost of their course tuition. Student Government also coordinates a "matching" program, to match public-interest students with other students whose employers will sponsor course tuition. HLS does not endorse any specific bar review company, and encourages you to determine which course is best for you by speaking to recent graduates, bar review company representatives, and employers. Additional state-specific requirements for UBE states With the wider adoption of the UBE, many states that use the UBE now require that applicants complete an additional, state-specific component that ensures applicants understand key distinctions in certain areas for that state's laws. Both Massachusetts and New York require state-specific examinations to be completed; Massachusetts has the Massachusetts Law Component (MLC) and New York has the New York Law Course (NYLC) followed by the New York Law Exam (NYLE). Admission to multiple jurisdictions or reciprocity or score transfer Some students seek admission to multiple states at the same time, and with the wider adoption of the UBE this has become easier. Students seek multiple admissions for many reasons, whether for future employment opportunities, plans to relocate in the near future, or because there are useful admission combinations, such as New York and D.C., New York and Massachusetts, and New York and New Jersey. You may hear terms such as "score transfer," "waiving in," or "admission by motion"; these are all terms for seeking admission to another state without taking that state's bar exam. Not all jurisdictions allow this, however, so be sure to research your options thoroughly. States that use the UBE typically allow for a "score transfer," where you take the exam in one state and then, once your exam score is released, apply to another state using their score transfer process. Sometimes people transfer their score as soon as it is released, other times they wait a little bit longer to start the process. You should note that every state that allows this also sets a limit on how long that score is valid, ranging from 2 years to 5 years. Non-UBE states do not have portable scores, to either UBE or other non-UBE states, but sometimes transferring the MBE (multistate bar exam) score is possible. For states that allow this, both states must use the UBE and, provided it is considered passing in the second state, you can transfer your MBE score and only take the essay portion of the bar exam in the second state. Some states have a further requirement that there be reciprocity between the two states. Note that military spouse attorneys may be able to apply for a temporary permit to practice while in a state on military orders without needing to take an additional bar exam. See the Military Spouse J.D. Network website for more information. Every state has its own application and materials to apply to sit for the bar exam, so the relevant forms and materials can be found on the states Board of Bar Examiners website. May states allow e-filing of applications now, so you will need to create an account with the state's services. Some states require that all materials, bar exam application and character and fitness application, be submitted at the same time. Others have you submit the materials separately. Most bar applications also require that certain forms be filled out by you or by HLS. Forms requiring a signature by a school official should be sent to the Registrar's Office, even a "Dean's Certification" form and forms related to character and fitness. You can get character and fitness advising in the Dean of Students Office, but the forms must be signed by the Registrar. Students who plan to request testing accommodations on the bar exam should first go to the bar admission website of the state where they are taking the exam and familiarize themselves with the application requirements and deadlines. Many states have early deadlines for accommodations information and it may take time to gather and process the necessary documentation, so give yourself plenty of time to complete this. Please also keep in mind that HLS' process of providing accommodations is not necessarily reflective of the process for receiving testing accommodations on the bar exam. Accommodation application deadlines for the most common bar exam jurisdictions for HLS students can be found here. Links to most common jurisdictions' accommodation webpages are also provided for students to familiarize themselves with the application requirements. Accessibility Services (accessibility@law.harvard.edu) is an excellent resource for additional assistance and information about requesting accommodations on the bar exam. Information about requesting accommodations on the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE) can be found on the NCBE website. Students should first go to the bar admission website of the state where they are taking the bar exam and familiarize themselves with the character and fitness application process. In addition to examinations, each applicant is required to produce evidence that they are a person of honest demeanor and good moral character, possessing the requisite fitness to perform the obligations and responsibilities of a practicing attorney at law. While character and fitness disclosures vary by state, you should be prepared to list specifics of every place you have lived since you turned 18, every job you have held (with contacts to confirm employment) since you turned 18, every speeding ticket, any disciplinary action in school, and any arrest or criminal charge as well as full details of the incident. You should start assembling the documents months in advance of your application due date because the process can be time-consuming. If you are concerned about how to disclose a certain piece of information, you can contact the Dean of Students Office or Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers, a lawyer assistance program funded by bar dues, or your anticipated bar exam jurisdiction's office. Where a character & fitness application requires a certification from the Dean of the Law School, this form should be sent to the Registrar's Office. Many states require a set of fingerprints for the character & fitness review process. The Harvard University Police Department will provide fingerprinting services. What is the MPRE? The Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE) is required for admission to the bars of all U.S. jurisdictions except Wisconsin and Puerto Rico. The MPRE is based on the law governing the professional conduct of lawyers. It's a two hour, 60-question multiple-choice exam administered three times per year (March, August, and November). J.D. students may sit for the MPRE before taking a Legal Profession course at HLS. Some jurisdictions, such as Massachusetts, require a passing score on file before you are allowed to apply for the bar exam. Other jurisdictions require a passing score before you are allowed to sit for the bar exam. Still others allow you to obtain a passing score after taking the bar exam. Check applicable requirements with your state bar association, particularly if you are considering waiting until March of your 3L year to take the MPRE. Be aware that if you wait to take the MPRE after sitting for the bar, you may delay your bar admission. Unlike the bar exam, students do not have to take the MPRE in the jurisdiction where they plan to practice. Registering and Preparing for the MPRE The MPRE registration deadline is often nearly 2 months before the actual exam, and no late registrations are accepted. You should register early to get your preferred test location, since easy to get to locations will fill up. Applying for MPRE exam accommodations has an even earlier recommended deadline, so be sure to start your research and application process early. You must be approved for accommodations before registering for the exam. Most students take a prep course offered by a bar preparation company or rely on the practice materials available on the MPRE website. Many bar prep companies offer free MPRE courses. You can find answers to some frequently asked questions about forms, the bar exam, and the admission process on our FAQ page. You can schedule an appointment with the HLS Bar Advisor here. You can sign up for applicable Bar Exam updates here.