

# MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS

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## INFORMATION FOR BAR EXAMINATION APPLICANTS

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**Rule 3:01, 1.3 of the Rules of the Supreme Judicial Court provides: “All petitions for admission shall be referred to the Board of Bar Examiners for a report as to the character, acquirements and qualifications of the applicant.”**

### **Subjects**

*Applicants will be expected to be familiar with the law in the following fields:*

Access to Justice	Federal Rules of Civil Procedure
Agency	Massachusetts Rules of Civil Procedure
Business Organizations	Professional Responsibility
Constitutional Law	Real Property (including Mortgages)
Contracts	Torts
Criminal Law	Trusts
Descent & Distribution of Estates	Unfair or Deceptive Practices (G.L.c. 93A)
Domestic Relations	Uniform Commercial Code (articles 1-9)
Evidence (including Federal Rules)	Wills
Federal Jurisdiction	

### **Board of Bar Examiners Suggestions for Writing the Massachusetts Essay Examination**

#### **Think before you write**

Read each question carefully; think through the facts, and their necessary implications. Outline the issues or problems; reach your conclusions; analyze your conclusions from the standpoints both of the law and of common-sense; revise them if necessary. Then decide on a logical, orderly, and convincing arrangement for the statement of your views. You are not ready to write until you have done all that.

#### **Do not restate the facts**

The examiners know what the facts are and you have no time to waste.

#### **Do not state abstract or irrelevant propositions of law**

It is usually undesirable to begin an answer with a legal proposition. If the proposition is applicable it will be more appropriate later in the answer, in order to indicate the reason for your conclusion. If it is not applicable, it cannot help you to state it. Although it is seldom necessary to state any applicable rule of law in full detail, make a sufficiently detailed reference to it in

your answer so that the examiner will not be in doubt as to your knowledge of it and of the conditions, which makes its application proper. Do not, by speculating on what the case would have been if the facts had been different, nor in any other way, work into your answer some point of law with which you happen to be familiar, but which is not called for by the question. The examiners are not interested in knowing how many rules of law you have learned, but rather, the way in which you apply the applicable rules to the facts stated.

**Discuss as many problems that you can identify**

A grasp of all the issues is essential. For example, if you identify three issues, do not waste time on discussing only one.

**Express yourself clearly, as a lawyer should**

If handwriting the essay, **write legibly**. Avoid ambiguous, meaningless, and rambling statements; verbosity, and long, involved sentences; undue repetition; and flippancy, slang and colloquialism.

**The purpose of the bar examination is to test your ability to think and express yourself as a lawyer**

The bar exam is designed to test your ability to apply what you have already learned to the facts of the problems such as those which might arise in your practice. The value of an answer depends not only upon your conclusions, but even more upon the evidence it displays of the elements mentioned above.

**Grading Information**

The Board of Bar Examiners has adopted the following scoring method for the bar examination. The MBE part contains two-hundred (200) multiple choice questions. Scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly. Examinees are therefore advised to answer every question. The total number of correct answers, adjusted statistically to provide the variations in question difficulties in relation to previous MBE examinations, is an examinee's MBE Scaled Score.

The Essay Examination part contains ten (10) questions, each question graded on the basis of zero to seven (0-7) points. The sum of the points obtained on the ten (10) questions is the examinee's Raw Essay Score.

In order to combine a Raw Essay Score with an MBE Scaled Score, it is necessary to change (or convert) a Raw Essay Score to a score on the same distribution of scores as the MBE Scaled Score. The Essay Scaled Score and the MBE Scaled Score will be added together for the Total Scaled Score.

**Passing Score**

A Total Scaled Score of 270 or greater is the passing score on the Massachusetts bar examination.

### **Essay Examination Rereads**

Before the results of the written law examination become final, the Board of Bar Examiners will re-read the Essay Examinations of those applicants whose Total Scaled Score is 265 or more but less than 270. The final raw score for such Essay Examinations will be the average of the scores of the two readings. The resulting average after the essay has been re-read could be higher or lower than the original score. There is no minimum or required passing scaled score for the MBE part or a minimum or passing score for the essay part of the written bar examination. A high score on one part can compensate for a low score on the other part when the two scores are added together for a total scaled score of 270. No additional rereads will be conducted.

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### **Amending your Bar Application**

Board of Bar Examiners Rule V.1.2 establishes a continuing obligation to disclose changes and updates to information provided on your bar application. This obligation remains in effect until you have been administered the Oath of Attorney. You are required to submit, in writing, changes or additional information to your bar application. Your failure to do so may result in the delay or denial of your admission to the Bar. You may call the office of the Board of Bar Examiners at (617) 482-4466 if you have questions regarding this requirement.

### **Address Changes, Postal or E-Mail**

Change of address forms are available at [www.mass.gov/bbe](http://www.mass.gov/bbe) and should be submitted to the Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court for Suffolk County. Address changes must be received by the Clerk's Office by mid-October for the July examination and by mid-April for the February examination in order to ensure proper and timely delivery of your examination results.

### **Receiving your Exam Results**

Bar exam result letters will be sent by first-class mail to the address of record submitted by you to the Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court for Suffolk County. Exam results will not be provided by telephone, e-mail, or in person. While there is no predetermined date for releasing the results of the bar examination, as a general rule, result letters are mailed on or before April 30<sup>th</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup>, respectively, for the preceding February and July exams. Examinees that have passed the written portion of the examination (MBE and Essay) will be listed on the Board's web page at [www.mass.gov/bbe](http://www.mass.gov/bbe) following the mailing of individual results letters.

### **Transferring your Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) Scores**

#### ***From another Jurisdiction to Massachusetts***

If you are taking the MBE portion of the bar examination concurrently in another jurisdiction you must make arrangements to have your score transferred to Massachusetts following the

procedures outlined by that jurisdiction. All MBE requests for score transfers from another jurisdiction must be completed with required fees paid to the transferring jurisdiction **prior** to sitting for the essay portion of the Massachusetts Bar Examination.

You are solely responsible to ensure the timely transfer of your concurrent MBE score to Massachusetts. Transferred MBE scores should be sent from the transferring jurisdiction to the Massachusetts Board of Bar Examiners, Edward W. Brooke Courthouse, 24 New Chardon Street, 1st flr., Boston, MA 02114.

***From Massachusetts to another Jurisdiction***

If you are taking the MBE portion of the bar examination in Massachusetts and wish to have your MBE score transferred to another jurisdiction, you must complete the MBE Transfer and Score Advisory Request Form. This form, along with a fee of \$25.00 payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, must be submitted to the Board of Bar Examiners as soon as possible. Personal checks are NOT accepted.

**MBE Score Advisory**

To determine whether the MBE score previously earned in Massachusetts meets the requirements for admission in another jurisdiction, please complete the advisory portion on the MBE Transfer and Score Advisory Request Form. This form, along with a fee of \$25.00 payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, may be submitted to the Board of Bar Examiners. Massachusetts does not release a precise MBE score achieved in Massachusetts to an examinee. For specific requests and limitations of other jurisdictions, contact those jurisdictions.