

MASSACHUSETTS BAR EXAMINATION
GRADING INFORMATION

The **Massachusetts Bar Examination** is comprised of:

1. The **Multistate Bar Examination**, (MBE) containing two-hundred (200) multiple choice questions and four response options per question; and
2. The **Essay Examination**, containing ten (10) questions each requiring a constructed response from the examinee.

Examination Scoring

**A Final Total Scale Score of 270 or greater is required to pass the
Massachusetts Bar Examination**

The MBE Score

Scores for this portion of the bar examination are based on the number of multiple choice questions answered correctly by an examinee. The resulting “raw” scores are adjusted statistically by the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) to account for variations in the difficulty levels of the exam over time. The adjusted score is referred to as the **Scaled MBE Score** and is reported to one decimal point.

The Essay Score

Scores for this portion of the bar examination are determined on the basis of a possible score of zero to seven (0-7) on each essay question. The sum of the points received for each essay question comprises an examinee’s **Raw Essay Score**. To account for differences in question difficulty and grader leniency across examinations over time, the Raw Essay Score is converted, or “scaled,” to a distribution that has the same mean and standard deviation as the Scaled MBE Scores for all Massachusetts examinees. The resulting score, referred to as the **Scaled Essay Score**, is rounded and reported to two decimal places.

Initial Grading

- If, after the initial grading of the essay questions, an examinee receives a Total Scaled Score of 270 or greater, the examinee passes the exam.
- If, after the initial grading of the essay questions, the examinee receives a Total Scaled Score of 264 or lower, the examinee fails the exam.
- If, after initial grading an examinee’s Total Scaled Score is greater than 264 but less than 270, each of that examinee’s essay answers are graded again by a different grader (“Re-Read”).

Re-Read

- For those examinees whose essay answers were Re-Read, the final score for each essay question will be the average number of points assigned by the two gradings, rounded to 1 decimal place. **Essays are not subject to any further readings.** Similar to the initial scoring, the sum of the averaged points received for each essay question is the examinee's Raw Essay Score.
- The Raw Essay Score is then converted to a Final Scaled Essay Score using the same procedures as used before re-reading. It is rounded and reported to two decimal places.

The Final Total Scaled Score

To calculate an examinee's Total Scaled Score, the scaled MBE and scaled Essay scores are summed together and then rounded to the nearest whole number (i.e., any score with a decimal portion $< .50$ is rounded downwards while any score with a decimal portion $.50$ or above is rounded upward). For example, a score of 269.49 is rounded to 269 while a score of 269.50 rounds up to 270. **A Final Total Scale Score of 270 or greater is required to pass the Massachusetts Bar Examination.**

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