Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Board of Bar Examiners

INFORMATION FOR LAPTOP COMPUTER EXAMINEES

Bring your laptop computer on **Thursday,** for the essay portion of the Massachusetts bar examination. **Do not bring** your laptop on Wednesday, the Multistate Bar Examination day.

The Massachusetts Board of Bar Examiners has contracted with ExamSoft Worldwide, Inc. (ExamSoft) to use its security software product, SofTest, for the essay portion of the bar examination. SofTest is a high stakes assessment program developed and licensed by ExamSoft that enables exam takers to securely take examinations downloaded to their own laptop computers by blocking access to files, programs and the Internet during an exam.

Approximately six (6) weeks before the exam you will receive an email notice from ExamSoft to download and register the software. Please note, ExamSoft will be sending an email notice from laptop@bbe.state.ma.us. The dates of the registration period for ExamSoft will be posted on the Massachusetts Board of Bar Examiners' Custom Home Page (CHP) on ExamSoft's website which can be found at www.examsoft.com/mabar.

If you have not successfully registered and downloaded the software during the designated registration period you will NOT be able to test with your laptop computer. If this occurs you will be required to handwrite the examination. You will remain in your original assigned section and a proctor will issue you an essay answer booklet.

Please visit ExamSoft Bar Help portal at www.examsoft.com/barexam for more information regarding registration processes, answer file upload and confirmation and best practices. If you have any questions or problems with the software or with downloading your examination files, please contact ExamSoft toll free at **(866) 429-8889** or via email at support@examsoft.com for technical support.

Once the initial download process is complete, three secure examination files will be downloaded to your computer: the mock exam and two exam files to be used on the exam day. These two exam files are password protected. You cannot open them until the essay day (Thursday) of the Massachusetts bar examination. The morning and afternoon passwords for the answer files will be provided at your seat on the day of the essay exam.

You are **required** to take the Mock Exam at least once, and you may take it up to 5 times to test your laptop computer. The Mock Exam allows you to familiarize yourself with the SofTest exam environment and the word processing features. You must learn how to navigate the SofTest question windows so you **do not type all answers** in the screen for Question 1. The Mock Exam allows you to save your answer file and become familiar with the upload procedures. Please see the following link on how to take a mock exam and how to download an additional copy of the Mock Exam - http://go.examsoft.com/takeexam. The password to open a mock exam is 'mock123'.

Following the completion of the essay examination on Thursday, you will be required to connect to the Internet and upload your morning and afternoon answer files before leaving the exam site. Internet connectivity is available at the Massachusetts exam sites. In most cases the upload of your answer files begins immediately after you click the "**Exit and Upload**" button at the end of each session. Instructions for uploading your answer files will be provided at the examination site.

NOTE: Your essay answer files must be uploaded to ExamSoft's secure web server as directed prior to leaving the exam site on the essay examination day (Thursday). Failure to upload your answer files before leaving the examination site may result in the disqualification of your essay answers.

Answers not uploaded prior to leaving the examination site will NOT be graded. Applicants who took the examination but did not upload an answer file will receive grades of zero (0) for those answers.

Essay Examination Day Procedures for Laptop Computer Examinees

Prior to Arrival at the Examination Site

- It is your responsibility to ensure your laptop is in working order **PRIOR** to the start of the essay examination. On the day of the essay exam the ExamSoft site engineers will **not** help with installing the software, registering your computer or the start-up procedure at the beginning of the exam. If your computer laptop is not ready to begin at the designated time you must begin the examination by handwriting. **No extra time** will be provided to ensure that a laptop computer is ready to be used before the examination session begins.

- Although power is provided for laptop computer test takers at all exam sites it is recommended that all laptops can function on battery power for at least one (1) hour in the event of a power loss.

- All screensavers and/or hibernation features currently installed on your laptop computer **must be disabled** and all volume controls set to mute or to the lowest possible setting.

- **All external media** such as DVDs, CDs, floppy disks, USB memory drives, etc. must be removed prior to arrival at test site.

- You may not take your computer case/bag into the Examination Room. If you bring it to the examination site, you will be required to store it in an *unsecured* designated area. All laptop cases/bags left in the unsecured storage area must have an identifying tag with your name attached. There will be **no access to this designated area until the end of the afternoon session**.

  On ExamSoft's Support Portal you will find the directions and procedures when using SofTest for two bar exams. Technical support from ExamSoft is available to you via

email at support@examsoft.com or by phone toll-free at **(866) 429-8889** if you need assistance performing these necessary steps.

Early Arrival at Examination Site

You must arrive at your Examination Room by **8:30AM** with your computer laptop, a fully charged battery and your power cord. If you use an external mouse and full-sized keyboard, you may bring those as well. When you enter the Examination Room go to your section and pre-assigned seat. Once you have located your assigned seat, you should immediately begin setting up your computer and launch SofTest. After plugging into the power outlet at the exam site check the A/C power indicator light on your laptop computer to confirm that you are running on A/C power (power from outlet).

At your seat will be *SofTest Exam Day Instructions* detailing the process for starting up your laptop computer and initializing the SofTest program. The password for the morning exam file will be included in these instructions. The instructions have several steps and will bring you to the "***Begin***" screen, which is **immediately prior** to the Essay answer screen. **Do not type "**Begin**"** until instructed by the Bar Examiner/Room Supervisor. If you have any problems during the start up process, you must notify a proctor immediately. The proctor will give you the essay answer booklets and you will be required to handwrite the entire essay portion of the bar examination. It is your responsibility to ensure your laptop is in working order **PRIOR** to time of the examination.

Morning Exam Session

The morning essay questions will be distributed to all applicants by the section proctors. The morning session consists of five (5) essay questions and lasts for three (3) hours. Because each session is considered one test, you are permitted to access your answers to **all five (5) essay questions** throughout the session. Use the blue arrow keys to navigate among the SofTest question windows. Type your answer to Question 1 in the screen for Question 1, type your answer to Question 2 in the screen for Question 2, and type your answer to Question 3 in the screen for Question 3, etc. **Technical assistance will not be provided under any circumstances while the examination is in progress.**

When leaving your seat (i.e. restroom break), block your screen by clicking the "**Actions**" menu, then **Hide Exam**. When you return, click OK to continue.

Your **laptop computer must remain in the Examination Room throughout the entire length of the examination.** If you should finish the examination early, you may leave the area after you have saved your answer file, closed the exam and exited the program. Your laptop, however, must remain at your seat until you have completed the afternoon session and uploaded your answer files.

NOTE: Once you **save** your answers, and **close** the exam and **exit** the program, your examination session is completed and you cannot reopen your AM essay answer file. During periods of non-testing, your laptop computer must remain at the Windows/Mac desktop.

Completion of Examination Session (AM or PM) Prior to Time Being Called

If you complete the essay examination before the 15-minute announcement is given, you may follow the post-examination instructions to save your answers. Once you have completed the instructions to exit SofTest, signal the proctor by raising your hand and you may leave the

Examination Room. Your laptop computer must remain on from boot up at 8:30 AM until the end of testing at approximately 5:00 PM. **It cannot be removed from the Examination Room until you have finished the afternoon session, saved and exited the program, and have uploaded both the AM and PM answer files.**

Completion of Examination Session (AM or PM) After Time is Called

Be mindful that if you are still working when time is called, you must **immediately** lift your hands from the keys. You will be able to use your mouse **ONLY** to exit the testing software. You must keep your other hand in your lap while following post-examination instructions.

To exit SofTest click the "**Exit and Save**" button then click the "**Close Exam**" button. On the final yellow screen click the "**Exit and Upload"** button. You will be returned to your desktop. The ***upload of your answer file begins immediately*** if you are connected to a wireless connection.

Lunch Period – Note: Your lunch period is short, plan accordingly.

Lunch Dismissal: You will be dismissed for lunch (approximately 12:30 PM). All applicants must leave the Examination Room at this time. If you are having difficulty ***saving your answer file,*** however, please remain in the Examination Room.

Return: You will be permitted to enter the Examination Room at approximately 1:40 PM to begin the start up process for the afternoon session. You are required to return to the Examination Room no later than instructed by the Bar Examiner/Room Supervisor to ensure sufficient time for the boot up process.

Afternoon Session

At your seat will be the afternoon *SofTest Exam Day Instructions* detailing the process for starting up your laptop computer and initializing the SofTest program. Instructions for your laptop are similar to those for the morning session. The password for the afternoon exam file will be included in these instructions.

The afternoon session consists of five (5) essay questions (questions 6 through 10) and lasts for three (3) hours. Because each session is considered one test, you are permitted to access your answers to **all five (5) essay questions** throughout the session. Use the blue arrow keys to navigate among the SofTest question windows. Type your answer to Question 6 in the screen for Question 6, type your answer to Question 7 in the screen for Question 7, and type your answer to Question 8 in the screen for Question 8, etc. **Technical assistance will not be provided while the exam is in progress under any circumstances.**

End-of-Day

Similar to the morning session, if you complete the examination before the 15-minute announcement is given; you can follow the post-examination instructions to save your answers and to upload your answer files. You may not leave the Examination Room, however, **until the upload is complete. Your computer must be shut down and closed before exiting the Examination Room.**

Post Examination Procedures

The upload process should take only a few minutes since there is wireless Internet connection at the examination site. **Your essay answer files must be uploaded to ExamSoft's secure web server as directed prior to leaving the exam site on the essay examination day (Thursday).** Failure to upload your answer files at the exam site may result in the disqualification of your essay answers.

A visual "progress status" (blue bar) is displayed as the upload takes place. When the upload is complete, a green "**Congratulations**" screen is displayed informing you that your files uploaded successfully. Two separate email confirmations (AM and PM) will be sent within 15 minutes to the email address you provided when you filed your bar application.

If you have problems uploading your answer files, ExamSoft site engineers will be present to assist you at the end of the PM session. ***Technical support, however, will not be available while the exam is in progress*****.** Technical support from ExamSoft will also be available via email at support@examsoft.com after the conclusion of the exam.

Your hard drive will contain an encrypted version of your essay answers that will be used in the event of a catastrophic failure. Reformatting your hard drive will delete these files and will render your examination invalid. **DO NOT** ***reformat your hard drive until after examination results have been released***. 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 30th and October 31st, respectively, for the preceding February and July exams. If any problems occur during the printing of your essay answers, you will be contacted and required to produce your laptop computer for analysis of the encrypted version of SofTest on your hard drive.

DO NOT REMOVE SOFTEST FROM YOUR LAPTOP UNTIL AFTER YOU HAVE RECEIVED YOUR RESULTS.

Computer-Based Testing Reminders

- Power will be supplied. You are **required to bring a power cord adaptor** for your computer. If you do not bring a power cord adaptor you will be required to hand-write the exam.

- A mouse and/or full-size keyboard are permitted.

- The start of the bar exam will not be delayed due to a hardware or software problem with your laptop computer nor will you be provided additional time to take your exam.

- If you leave your seat for any reason during testing, you must block your screen before leaving. You can do so by selecting the "**Actions**" menu, then **Hide Exam**. When you return, click **OK** to continue.

- In the event a software or hardware failure occurs during administration of the examination that cannot be resolved immediately, you will be required to hand write your essay answers. **No additional testing time will be given.**

- If you finish early, you may not use your computer to access the Internet or anything else on your computer while in the examination room. This means **NO** browsing, chatting, emailing, game playing, etc. You may not use your laptop for personal use until completion of your afternoon session and you have uploaded your exam files and have received a green "**Congratulations**" screen informing you that your files uploaded successfully.

- If you are still working when time is called, you must **immediately** lift your hands from the keys**. You will be able to use your mouse ONLY to exit SofTest.** You must keep your other hand in your lap.

- It is not possible to take secure exams through a virtual operating system such as Microsoft's Virtual Machine, Parallels or VMware, VMware Fusion or any other virtual operating system environment. ExamSoft does not support Tablet-PC's. The iPad is not supported.

- Do not copy the ExamSoft Program from one computer to another. You will not be able to start the exam if you copy SoftTest and the test files to another computer. Do not bring other laptop computers or word processors to the test site to use as backups.

- Any attempt to disable or tamper with SofTest's security features is prohibited. If it is discovered that tampering has been attempted, this information will be reported to the Board of Bar Examiners for whatever action it may deem appropriate, which could include disqualification for admission to the bar in Massachusetts.

- **Do not remove SofTest from your laptop until after you have received your results**.

- The Board of Bar Examiners expects all applicants using a laptop computer to adhere to the terms and conditions that are set forth in the ***Statement of Compliance*** form for the Laptop Computer Testing Program.

- **Your essay answer files MUST be uploaded at the exam site on Thursday, the essay day before leaving the Examination Room. Answers not uploaded by the deadline will NOT be graded. Applicants who took the examination but did not upload their answer files will receive grades of zero (0) for those answers.**

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