



2020

Year in Review

CONTENTS





1 Letter from the NCBE Board Chair: A Year of Challenge and Change	6 Responding to the COVID 19 Pandemic	15 Jurisdiction Services
2 Letter from the NCBE President and CEO: Finding Solutions in an Unprecedented Year	8 Testing Task Force: Crossing the Finish Line	17 Candidate Services
3 NCBE Mission, Vision, and Core Values	9 A Fully Computer Based MPRE	18 Educational Events
4 Who We Are & What We Do	9 BarNow: Helping Candidates Prepare	20 Law School Outreach
5 Furthering Our Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion	10 2020 by the Numbers	21 Research and Publications
	12 NCBE Exams	22 NCBE Board of Trustees and Senior Staff (back cover)



National Conference
of Bar Examiners

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ncbex.org
thebarexaminer.org
testingtaskforce.org

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A Year of Challenge and Change



Hulett H. Askew
2020-2021 NCBE Board Chair

In the future, when we look back at bar admissions in the year 2020, we will mostly remember a year of challenge and change. The challenge, of course, was the pandemic—adapting to the disruptions in legal education and safe, secure testing, and determining how to ensure that the bar exam remained true to its purpose and promise. The change was the implementation of the first-ever remote bar exams.

Long-term change was also evidenced in the completion of the NCBE Testing Task Force’s three-year study on the next generation of the bar exam and the release of its recommendations in early January 2021. Dealing with day-to-day challenges and changes while also planning for the future of bar admissions was a remarkable experience for all of us. It is without a doubt a year none of us will forget—and also a year I am quite happy to see in the rearview mirror.

This *Year in Review* publication emphasizes the multipronged

efforts of NCBE to partner with jurisdictions, to collaborate more broadly with the bar admissions community, to support applicants for admission, and to engage with the legal education community, while promoting diversity, inclusion, and fairness in all that we do. These efforts were all put to the test in 2020, but our commitments did not waver.

The respect of the NCBE Board of Trustees and staff for the daily challenges faced and overcome by bar admission administrators, boards of bar examiners, and the jurisdictions’ highest courts cannot be overstated. The fact that exams were administered in the summer and fall in a safe and secure environment, respecting health-care directives and making it possible for applicants to be tested and acquire licenses during this crisis, was truly remarkable. The Council of Bar Admission Administrators (CBAA) deserves huge credit for supporting and representing the jurisdictions during this time. The NCBE staff also deserves credit for its universal

commitment to the mission of NCBE and for transforming operations to provide guidance and support to jurisdictions, as documented in this publication.

NCBE does not see its work as narrowly limited to producing test products. Rather, it recognizes a much broader obligation to embrace the bar admissions and legal education communities as a whole—providing cohesiveness, collaboration, and a shared sense of purpose for disparate stakeholders, each of whom contributes to the preparation of applicants to move from law student to licensed lawyer. We hope and expect that as a result, we have all emerged from the past year having built a better and more responsive system of bar admissions.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Askew".

Hulett H. Askew
2020–2021 NCBE Board Chair

Finding Solutions in an Unprecedented Year



Judith A. Gundersen
NCBE President and CEO

I would be remiss if I started any retrospective of 2020 without sending my heartfelt condolences to all those who have lost loved ones or suffered their own adverse physical and mental health effects as a result of COVID-19. The past year has reminded us all, too, of the enormous and exhausting toll exacted by racial injustice, equally injurious to mental and physical health. As our country looks to 2021 and beyond, I remain hopeful that the future will bring comfort, peace, and a more just and equitable society for all.

On behalf of the NCBE Board of Trustees and staff, I offer our empathy to the bar examination candidates who navigated changes and unexpected interruptions to the licensing process in 2020. We are proud to have helped jurisdictions provide continued opportunities for licensure in 2020, despite the unprecedented challenges the year presented, and we are indebted to the Courts and bar admissions staff in all jurisdictions for their tireless and collaborative efforts to make continued licensing possible. They, along with our truly amazing NCBE staff, worked around the clock to find solutions that resulted in a path forward for tens of thousands of new lawyers looking to enter the profession and serve the public.

As the following pages describe, the disruption of the July 2020 bar exam caused by the COVID-19 pandemic created the need for

additional iterations of the bar exam in September and October, including two additional in-person administrations and the first-ever remote bar exam. Remote testing produced new challenges for test delivery, proctoring, security, and fairness and accessibility for candidates. We are pleased to report that the great majority of candidates in 2020 were able to complete the licensure process with the help of the multiple opportunities for testing offered by NCBE and the jurisdiction boards of admission and Courts.

In-house, NCBE staff quickly transitioned to a mostly remote workforce and worked long hours to help ensure that jurisdictions would have the support they needed to continue the licensure process. Character and fitness investigations became more efficient, test development and scoring ramped up to produce not just one exam but four, and we produced more educational events and training roundtables than ever—all offered remotely, of course. NCBE also increased its outreach to law schools with a new MPRE aggregate data sharing program.

2020 also saw us furthering our commitment to diversity and inclusion in bar admissions and in the legal profession as a whole. By extending our collaboration with the Council on Legal Education Opportunity, Inc. (CLEO), and through the ongoing work of our

Diversity & Inclusion Committee in collaboration with our Meetings & Education and Testing & Research Departments, we took concrete steps in 2020 to support NCBE's vision of a competent, ethical, and diverse legal profession. We look forward to the launch of several new diversity and inclusion initiatives in 2021.

Finally, long after the dust from 2020 settles, we'll be moving forward on the heels of one of the year's major achievements: the completion of the NCBE Testing Task Force's three-year study of the bar exam, which resulted in recommendations that will guide the development of the next generation of the exam. The Testing Task Force, which began its work in 2018, will soon sunset and make way for our Implementation Steering Committee, tasked with developing the new exam and gathering input from and sharing progress with our stakeholders.

So, as honored as I am to present the 2020 *Year in Review* as a depiction of how NCBE responded to this extraordinary year, I also ask that you stay tuned for the 2021 edition and the exciting developments ahead. I have confidence that we can look forward to better days to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith".

Judith A. Gundersen
NCBE President and CEO



The National Conference of Bar Examiners, founded in 1931, is a not for-profit corporation that develops licensing tests for bar admission and provides character and fitness investigation services. NCBE also provides testing, research, and educational services to jurisdictions; provides services to bar applicants on behalf of jurisdictions; and acts as a national clearinghouse for information about the bar examination and bar admissions.

Our mission

NCBE promotes fairness, integrity, and best practices in admission to the legal profession for the benefit and protection of the public. We serve admission authorities, courts, the legal education community, and candidates by providing high-quality

- assessment products, services, and research;
- character investigations; and
- informational and educational resources and programs.

Our vision

A competent, ethical, and diverse legal profession

Our core values

NCBE is committed to

- excellence
- fairness
- integrity
- service



WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO



Our Partnership with Jurisdictions

We develop and produce the licensing and professional responsibility tests used by most US jurisdictions for admission to the bar. We help jurisdiction bar admissions processes run well from start to finish by providing support and training to jurisdiction administrators and graders, providing scoring and research services after each exam and on an as-needed basis, and conducting character and fitness investigations on behalf of jurisdictions. We provide financial and professional support to the Council of Bar Admission Administrators (CBAA).



Our Support for Applicants

We help streamline the process of applying for bar admission by providing score services and other admission-related services to applicants on behalf of jurisdictions and providing NCBE Accounts that offer applicants a one-stop secure web portal. We offer study aids with authentic bar exam and MPRE practice questions. Our website, www.ncbex.org, is a comprehensive resource for bar admission requirements in all US jurisdictions and for information about our tests, character and fitness investigation services, score services, and study aids.



Our Collaboration with the Bar Admissions Community

We sponsor a wide range of educational events for jurisdiction bar examiners, bar admission administrators, and states' highest courts, and we conduct ongoing research relevant to bar admissions testing, as well as providing support for graduate student research in this area. Our quarterly publication, the *Bar Examiner*, provides comprehensive, authoritative information about topics of interest to the bar admissions community.



Our Commitment to the Legal Education Community

We sponsor educational events for legal educators and publish news and information of interest to the legal education community. We work with organizations that support students preparing for law school and the bar, advancing our shared goals and building foundations for the future of the legal profession.

Furthering Our Commitment to **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

In 2020, NCBE extended its partnership with the Council on Legal Education Opportunity, Inc. (CLEO) for another three years in support of their shared goal of increasing diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

In addition to serving as NCBE's liaison with CLEO, NCBE's Diversity & Inclusion Committee (renamed in 2020 to better reflect its charges and purpose) continued its work to advance the participation of members of historically disadvantaged groups in all facets of legal education and bar admissions as part of NCBE's vision of a competent, ethical, and diverse legal profession. In October, as a joint program of the Diversity & Inclusion and Education Committees, NCBE offered a webinar to the bar admissions community, *Charting a New Course for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*. With the support of NCBE's Testing & Research Department, NCBE is preparing to launch a number of new diversity and inclusion initiatives in 2021.



Responding to the COVID-19 PANDEMIC

NCBE rapidly transformed its operations in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most NCBE staff pivoted to remote work in March, and we quickly adapted to ensure that we could provide crucial support to jurisdictions as they worked to meet the many challenges posed by this extraordinary year. This section highlights some of the ways our work changed in 2020.

TESTING

Three additional exam dates, and planning for 2021

Through significant efforts undertaken by NCBE's testing staff, NCBE made exam materials available to jurisdictions for [three additional exam dates](#) beyond the July 2020 exam:

- In April, NCBE announced that it would make exam materials available for [two additional administrations of the bar exam in the fall](#). Thirteen jurisdictions administered an exam on one of the two fall dates (seven of these jurisdictions offered an additional exam on another date).
- In June, NCBE announced that it would also make a limited set of exam materials available for an [emergency remote testing option](#) in October for those jurisdictions that determined that they could not safely administer an in-person exam. Twenty jurisdictions administered a remote exam using NCBE materials in October 2020.

In October, NCBE announced that it would make a full set of exam materials available for a [remote administration in February 2021](#). Thirty-three jurisdictions administered a remote exam using NCBE materials in February 2021.

RESEARCH

Guiding decision-making for 2020 and beyond

In addition to providing crucial support for decisions about how to make additional testing opportunities available to jurisdictions in 2020, NCBE's research staff prepared detailed information about the bar exam and alternative paths to licensure to help jurisdictions and courts make informed decisions.

Following the summer and fall exams, research staff members oversaw the development of a post-exam test taker survey, which provided valuable information about candidates' experiences and helped inform planning for 2021 exam administrations.

INVESTIGATIONS

Transition to digital workflow

Investigations staff, whose work was previously paper heavy, quickly developed processes to enable a digital workflow:

- Staff can now access and receive documents digitally, which led to a **40% reduction in paper handling** within the first six months of 2020.
- Applicants can now issue payments and submit forms electronically to NCBE, which **reduces the average length of the process from 13 days to 2 days**.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Transforming NCBE's staff to a remote workforce

NCBE's IT staff worked diligently to transform NCBE's 100-person staff into a largely remote workforce nearly overnight and continued to address all aspects of virtual operations throughout 2020 to ensure that all NCBE staff members could continue their work to serve jurisdictions during the pandemic.

COMMUNICATIONS

Sharing key information in rapidly changing circumstances

- NCBE kept jurisdictions, candidates, law schools, and the broader public informed by providing a **centralized, trustworthy source of information** on the NCBE website about jurisdiction announcements pertaining to the July bar exam.
- In April, NCBE published a **white paper** to assist jurisdiction courts and boards of bar examiners in evaluating some of the proposals being discussed for 2020 law school graduates in light of the uncertainty surrounding the July bar exam.

MEETINGS & EDUCATION

Shifting to virtual events and expanding opportunities to connect

- NCBE's meetings and educational events, ordinarily held in locations all over the country, moved **entirely online in 2020**.
- In addition to the usual annual events and committee meetings, NCBE offered numerous **webinars and informational sessions** to help jurisdictions learn from and connect with one another as they worked to ensure that the licensure process moved forward despite the challenges of the pandemic. NCBE provided the bar admissions community with more than **four times as many offerings as usual**.



The Testing Task Force was appointed by NCBE in 2018, charged with undertaking a comprehensive three year study to ensure that the bar exam continues to test the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent entry level legal practice in a changing profession.

Crossing the **FINISH LINE**



At the beginning of March 2020, the Testing Task Force published a report on the results of its Phase 2 nationwide practice analysis.

The Phase 2 report was followed by significant Phase 3 work undertaken over the summer, as the Task Force convened two committees that met by video conference to develop recommendations for the blueprint and design of the new examination. The recommendations were based on the results of the practice analysis and the opinions and ideas voiced by stakeholders during Phase 1, as well as the professional judgment and experience of the committee members.

The results of the two committee meetings were reviewed by NCBE’s Technical Advisory Panel of independent psychometric experts to provide additional measurement expertise, ideas, and perspectives to those of the Task Force’s independent research consultant and NCBE’s own measurement staff.

The Task Force’s preliminary recommendations were announced and submitted to the NCBE Board of Trustees for final approval in early 2021. The Board’s approval paves the way for work to begin on the implementation of the Task Force’s recommendations; the process is expected to take four to five years to complete.

Pre study Focus Group: 16 lawyers

Phase 1 Sessions: 400+ stakeholders

Phase 2 Focus Groups: 27 lawyers

PA Pilot Test: 82 lawyers

PA Survey Respondents: 14,846 lawyers

Blueprint Committee: 17 lawyers

Design Committee: 28 stakeholders

Assessment Experts: 14 experts

Stakeholders and Experts Involved in Every Step

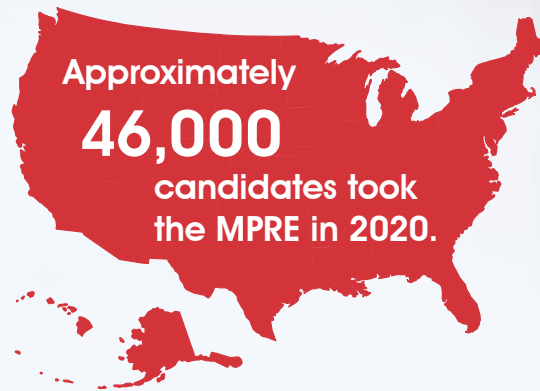
BLUEPRINT & TEST DESIGN COMMITTEES

17 members of the Blueprint Development Committee from 13 jurisdictions

28 members of the Test Design Committee from 20 jurisdictions and 11 law schools

MPRE[®]

Multistate Professional
Responsibility Examination



A Fully Computer-Based MPRE

2020 was the first year for a fully computer based MPRE. Approximately 46,000 candidates took the MPRE in March, August, or October 2020 at Pearson VUE testing centers across the country.

BarNow[®] Helping Candidates Prepare



NCBE provides authentic bar exam and MPRE practice questions on BarNow, its mobile-friendly, interactive eLearning platform.

In 2020, NCBE introduced a third simulated MBE on the platform, providing 100 additional study questions to help candidates prepare for the bar exam.

To help relieve the anxiety and hardship faced by many candidates due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NCBE offered discounts on the Everything Value Pack (which includes MBE, MEE, and MPT practice tests) and the Simulated MPRE (a 60-question practice test) beginning in June.

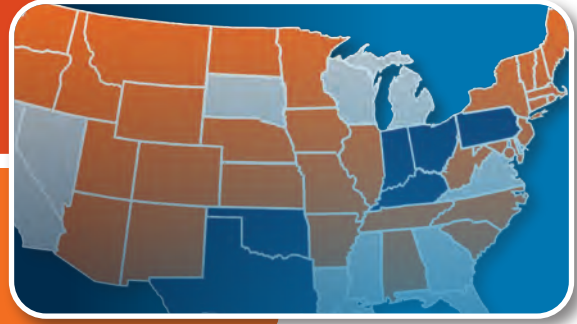
1,748 Everything Value Packs were purchased at a 50% discount in 2020.

1,149 MPRE Simulated Practice Tests were purchased at a \$10 discount in 2020.

2020 BY THE NUMBERS

15,636 UBE scores earned

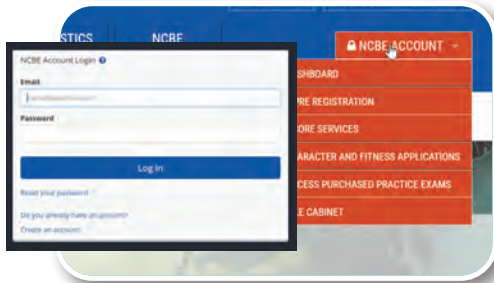
7,193 UBE scores transferred



39,547 Score services requests processed on behalf of jurisdictions and candidates



Meetings and educational events held 139



Active NCBE Accounts 100,406



12,149

Character and fitness applications conducted on behalf of 28 jurisdictions

102

NCBE staff members

66

drafting committee members from 27 jurisdictions, including faculty members from 35 law schools

12

Board of Trustees members from 12 jurisdictions

80

policy committee members from 44 jurisdictions

Online support inquiries received

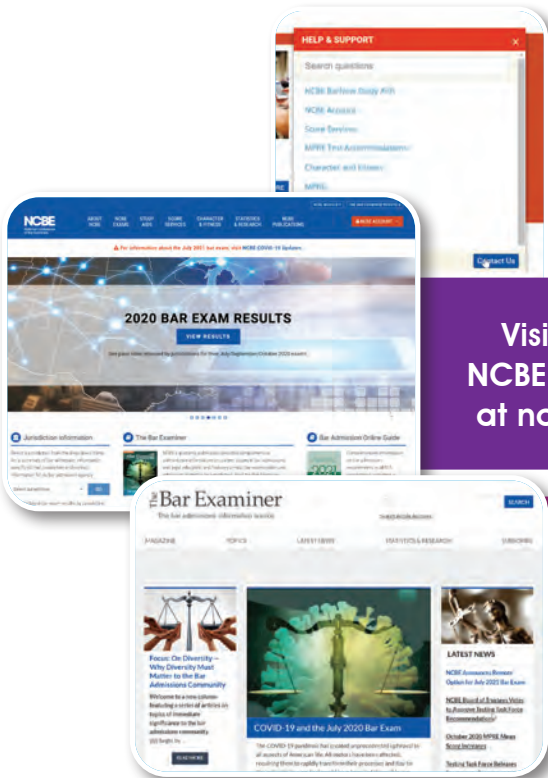
24,472

Visits to the NCBE website at ncbex.org

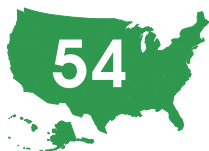
2,753,727

Visits to the Bar Examiner website at thebarexaminer.org

91,177



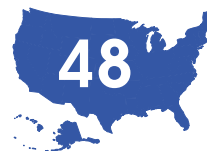
NCBE exams



54 jurisdictions used the MBE in 2020.



42 jurisdictions used the MEE in 2020.



48 jurisdictions used the MPT in 2020.

Note: The numbers above do not reflect the cancellation of the bar exam in two jurisdictions in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



27,028
MBE
examinees
in 2020



16,432
MEE
examinees
in 2020



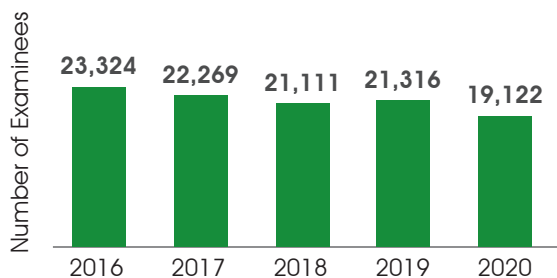
19,893
MPT
examinees
in 2020

MBE SNAPSHOT

February 2020 MBE Examinees:

19,122

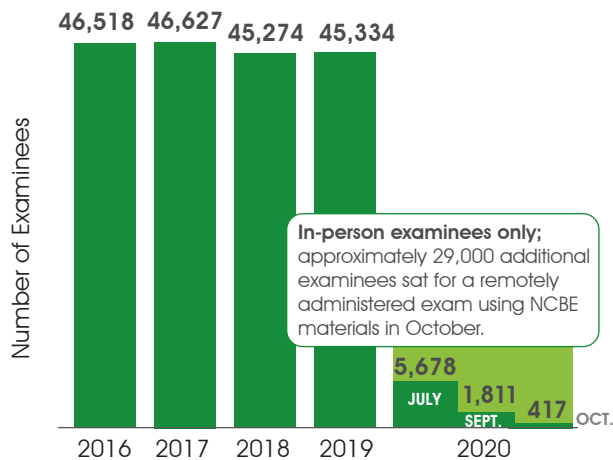
Number of February MBE Examinees 2016–2020



July/September/October 2020 MBE Examinees:

5,678/1,811/417

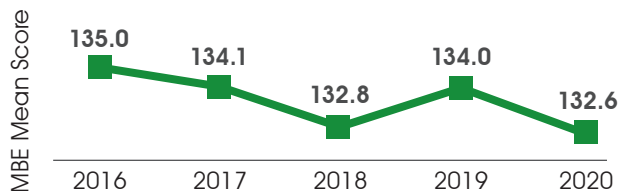
Number of July MBE Examinees 2016–2020



February 2020 MBE Mean Score:

132.6

February MBE Mean Score 2016–2020

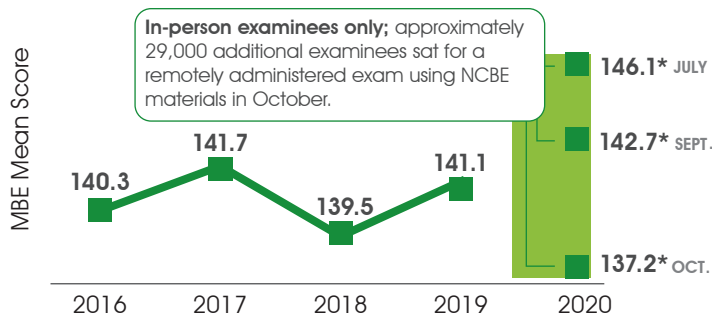


MBE scores are reported on a scale ranging from 0 to 200. The values reflect valid scores available electronically as of 3/17/20.

July/September/October 2020 MBE Mean Score:

146.1/142.7/137.2

July MBE Mean Score 2016–2020



MBE scores are reported on a scale ranging from 0 to 200. The values reflect valid scores available electronically as of 10/22/20.

MBE STANDARD DEVIATIONS

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
February	15.0	14.7	16.0	15.2	15.6
July	16.7	16.8	16.6	16.9	15.8 (July), 15.0 (Sept.), 17.8 (Oct.)

The Multistate Bar Examination (MBE), Multistate Essay Examination (MEE), and Multistate Performance Test (MPT) are administered by user jurisdictions as part of the bar examination in February and July each year.

Most jurisdictions use one or more of the bar exam components developed by NCBE:

The **Multistate Bar Examination (MBE)** is a 200-question multiple-choice exam that assesses the extent to which an examinee can apply fundamental legal principles and legal reasoning to analyze given fact patterns.

The **Multistate Essay Examination (MEE)** is a six-question essay exam that tests an examinee’s ability to identify legal issues, separate relevant from irrelevant material, analyze the issues, and demonstrate an understanding of fundamental legal principles.

The **Multistate Performance Test (MPT)** consists of two performance tasks that test an examinee’s ability to use fundamental lawyering skills in a realistic situation. Each item evaluates an examinee’s ability to complete a task that a newly licensed lawyer should be able to accomplish.

A majority of jurisdictions have adopted the **Uniform Bar Exam (UBE)**, which consists of the MBE, the MEE, and the MPT, and results in a portable score that can be transferred to other UBE jurisdictions.

Did you know?

There are 56 US jurisdictions: the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands.

UBE SNAPSHOT

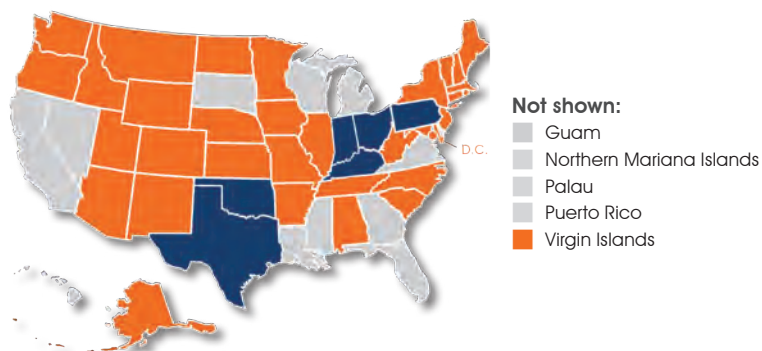
The Uniform Bar Examination (UBE) results in a portable score that can be used to apply for admission in other UBE jurisdictions.



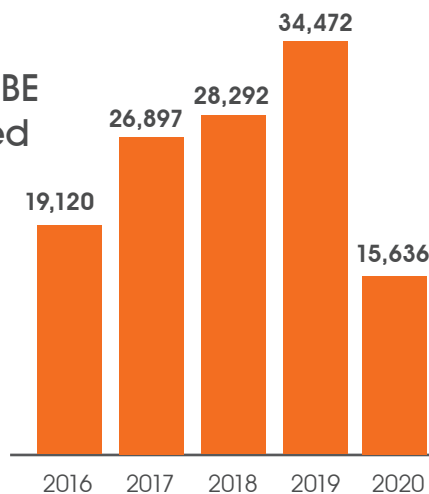
Number of jurisdictions that have adopted the UBE

34 jurisdictions administered the UBE in 2020.

6 additional jurisdictions have adopted the UBE (administration dates: Kentucky, Ohio, and Texas, February 2021; Indiana and Oklahoma, July 2021; and Pennsylvania, July 2022).



Number of UBE Scores Earned by Year 2016–2020

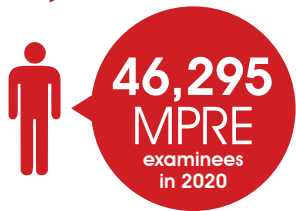


Total UBE Scores Earned and Transferred as of January 1, 2021



NCBE exams (continued)

MPRE SNAPSHOT



MPRE[®]

Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination

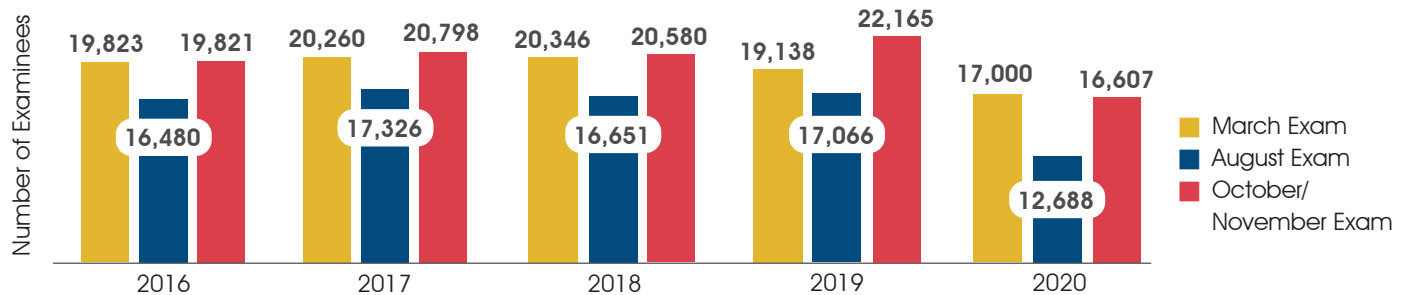
The **Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE)** is administered by NCBE through its test contractor three times per year.

Most jurisdictions require the MPRE, a 60-question multiple-choice exam that measures candidates' knowledge and understanding of established standards related to the professional conduct of lawyers.

2020 MPRE examinees by administration:



Number of MPRE Examinees 2016–2020

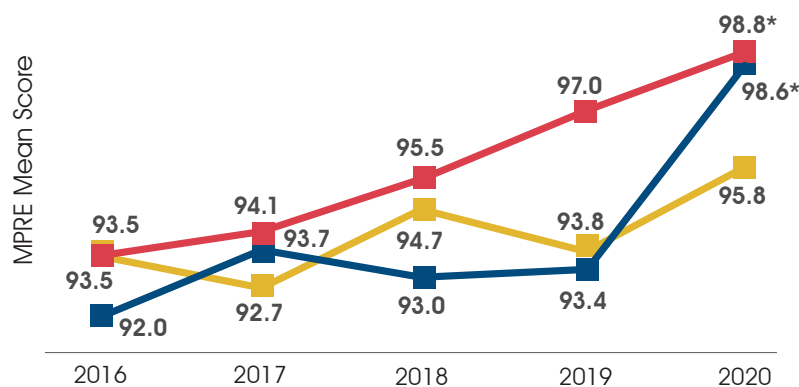


2020 MPRE mean score by administration:



MPRE Mean Scores 2016–2020

Legend: March Exam (Yellow), August Exam (Blue), October/November Exam (Red)



MPRE STANDARD DEVIATIONS

	March	August	Oct./Nov.
2016	17.6	17.7	17.3
2017	17.1	18.0	17.4
2018	17.9	17.8	18.2
2019	17.9	17.5	18.3
2020	18.5	18.3	18.8

MPRE scores are reported on a scale ranging from 50 to 150. The values reflect valid scores available electronically as of 4/1/20 for the March MPRE, 9/1/20 for the August MPRE, and 11/18/20 for the October MPRE.

*Comparability to prior results may be limited due to lower examinee counts in August and October 2020.

JURISDICTION services

Character and Fitness Investigations

12,149 
INVESTIGATIONS

28 
JURISDICTIONS

NCBE conducted **12,149** character and fitness investigations on behalf of **28** jurisdictions in 2020.

25 
JURISDICTIONS

25 jurisdictions used our online Character Report Application in 2020.

50 
JURISDICTIONS

50 jurisdictions used our Online Verification process in 2020.

45 
JURISDICTIONS

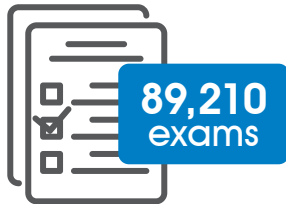
45 jurisdictions participated in our Cross-Reference service in 2020.

Did you know?

In addition to providing character and fitness investigation services, including an online Character Report Application, NCBE offers an Online Verification process that allows jurisdictions and law schools to electronically receive and respond to NCBE's investigation inquiries, as well as a Cross-Reference service that allows jurisdictions to determine whether applicants have previously submitted any type of application to another jurisdiction.



JURISDICTION services (continued)



In 2020, NCBE performed scoring, equating/scaling, and other statistical analyses for **89,210** exams.

Score Scaling Services



JURISDICTIONS

37 jurisdictions used our score scaling services in 2020.



NCBE performs statistical analysis, equating, and scoring for each MBE and MPRE administration, and offers score scaling services to scale the written components of the bar exam to the MBE.

NCBE also prepares data forensics reports for cases in which examinees are suspected of cheating and conducts additional testing-related research in partnership with jurisdictions. These services are available to all jurisdictions at no charge.

Research for Jurisdictions



In 2020, NCBE conducted research (including analyses related to suspected cheating) for 20 jurisdictions.



52 of the 54 jurisdictions that used the MBE in 2020 included NCBE Numbers as an identifier for examinees' scores.

CANDIDATE services



Score Services in 2020

MPRE[®]

Multistate Professional
Responsibility Examination

21,547

21,547 **MPRE scores transferred**
to jurisdictions

7,341

7,341 **MPRE score transcripts released**
to examinees

UBE[®]

Uniform Bar Examination

7,193

7,193 **UBE score transcripts transferred**
to jurisdictions

1,679

1,679 **UBE score transcripts released**
to examinees

MBE[®]

Multistate Bar Examination

908

908 **MBE scores transferred**
to jurisdictions

435

435 **MBE scores released**
to examinees

Study Aids Sold in 2020

1,993

1,993 multi-exam
study aids

1,048

1,048 MBE
study aids

1,211

1,211 MEE
study aids

266

266 MPT
study aids

1,582

1,582 MPRE
study aids

EDUCATIONAL events



UBE Jurisdictions Forum

Held in January, the annual UBE Jurisdictions Forum was an opportunity for bar admission administrators, bar examiners, and justices from jurisdictions that have adopted the UBE to learn about current issues and trends relevant to the UBE, as well as best practices in exam administration.

VIRTUAL

vision²⁰₂₀

Virtual Vision 2020 Webinar Series

With the cancellation of NCBE's "Vision 2020" Annual Bar Admissions Conference, NCBE launched a Virtual Vision 2020 webinar series (from April to July) on topics including Accommodations and Testing in the COVID 19 Era, Remote Proctoring and High Stakes Exams, and Mental Health and Well Being in the Age of Coronavirus and Beyond.



NCBE/CBAA Weekly Roundtable

From April to July, NCBE held 10 roundtables for the Council of Bar Admission Administrators (CBAA) to discuss a variety of issues facing jurisdictions with administration of the bar exam during the pandemic.



CLEO/NCBE Webinar: Going Forward: July, September, and October 2020 Bar Exams

In late April, NCBE co hosted a webinar with the Council on Legal Education Opportunity, Inc. (CLEO) for all third year law students participating in a CLEO program who were planning to take the bar exam in 2020. Thirty seven students attended the webinar, during which NCBE staff members and several jurisdiction representatives gave an overview of the three in person exam administrations in 2020 and jurisdiction processes being followed.



Webinar: The 2020 Bar Exam: July, September, and October

In April, NCBE began hosting a series of virtual events addressing bar admissions during the COVID 19 pandemic, beginning with an April 16 informational webinar for jurisdiction bar admission administrators and staff about the three in person exam options for July and beyond in 2020.



Webinar: Charting a New Course for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In October, NCBE offered a joint program of the NCBE Diversity & Inclusion and Education Committees that examined the impact and interdependence of our individual and collective roles in the pursuit of racial justice, representation, and equity.



Focus on Character and Fitness Webinar Series

In December, NCBE held a series of four webinars focusing on character and fitness. Webinars addressed the use of mental health questions in bar admissions, the role of social media in character and fitness investigations, soft skills and character, and NCBE's Cross Reference service.

Committee & Board Meetings

NCBE's Board of Trustees and policy committees meet regularly to evaluate current policies and practices and to recommend changes and improvements. Our drafting committees meet two to three times during the year to write and review exam questions.

4

Board of Trustees meetings

38

Policy Committee meetings

22

Drafting Committee meetings

Additional events in 2020

Grading Workshops

A total of four Grading Workshops were held in 2020. In addition to those following the February and July exams (the latter being conducted virtually), two more Grading Workshops were conducted virtually in September and October for the two additional exam administrations offered due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

NCBE/CBAA Annual Meeting

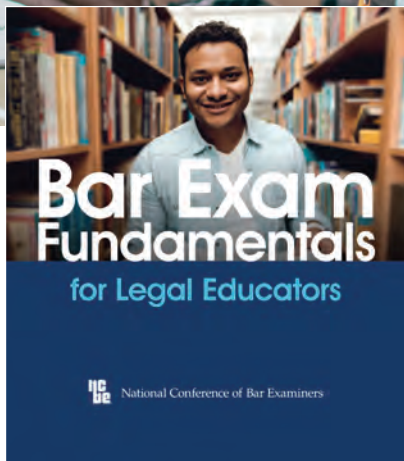
The 2020 Annual Meeting of NCBE and the Council of Bar Admission Administrators (CBAA) was held virtually over a series of dates in July and August, during which CBAA committees met and two plenary sessions were held to evaluate the remote and in-person administrations of the July bar exam.

CBAA Fall Meeting

The Council of Bar Admission Administrators held its Fall Meeting virtually in October and November, with CBAA committee meetings and plenary sessions on best practices in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and looking ahead to the February 2021 bar exam.

Traditionally, the Meetings & Education Department organizes 50–60 in-person events per year. After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, all of NCBE's events moved to a remote format. In 2020, NCBE organized 139 remote meetings, webinars, and events.

LAW SCHOOL outreach



Bar Exam Fundamentals for Legal Educators

In early 2020, NCBE published *Bar Exam Fundamentals for Legal Educators*. NCBE's newest publication addresses questions drawn from conversations NCBE has had with legal educators across the country about how the bar exam is developed, administered, and scored.

A PDF of [Bar Exam Fundamentals for Legal Educators](#) is available on NCBE's [Bar Examiner](#) website.

MPRE[®]

Multistate Professional
Responsibility Examination

MPRE Data Sharing Pilot Program

2020 also saw the launch of a pilot program to share summary MPRE candidate data with law schools. Through this program, NCBE supplies both national aggregate data and law school-specific aggregate data based on the cohort of examinees who have indicated that they are students or alumni of each school. Reports anonymously show law school-specific results grouped by score earned; participating schools also receive the national aggregate data report for comparison.



In 2020, 94 law schools participated in the pilot program. The program will be available to all law schools in 2021.

RESEARCH and publications



Testing & Research Staff Publications and Documents

- “Using a Linear Mixed-Effect Model Framework to Estimate Multivariate Generalizability Theory Parameters in R,” in *Behavior Research*
 - “Orthogonal Regression, the Cleary Criterion, and Lord’s Paradox: Asking the Right Questions”
 - “Shade Tree Psychometrics: Tools and Strategies for Linking Under Suboptimal Conditions”
 - *A Practical Guide to Test Blueprinting* (monograph)
-
- “Bar Admissions During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evaluating Options for the Class of 2020”
 - “Response by NCBE to the NYSBA Task Force Report”



2020 Covington Award Recipient

- **Kuo-Feng Chang**, University of Iowa, “A Comparison of Procedures to Detect Item Parameter Drift under 3PL and Rasch Models”
NCBE’s annual Joe E. Covington Award for Research on Testing for Licensure is intended to provide support for graduate students in any discipline doing research germane to testing and measurement, particularly in a high-stakes licensure setting.



Bar Admissions Resources

- NCBE’s quarterly magazine, the *Bar Examiner*, is a one-stop resource for news and in-depth articles relating to all aspects of the bar admissions process.
- The *Comprehensive Guide to Bar Admission Requirements*, published in collaboration with the American Bar Association, provides annually updated information on bar admission requirements in all US jurisdictions, including a directory of state bar admission agencies.



2020’s Most-Visited Articles at [thebarexaminer.org](https://www.ncbe.org/thebarexaminer.org):

- “Best Practices for Grading Essays and Performance Tests”
- “The Entry-Level Employment Market for New Law School Graduates 10 Years After the Great Recession”
- “It’s All Relative—MEE and MPT Grading, That Is”
- “NCBE’s Character and Fitness Investigation Services: A Look at the Present—a Vision of the Future”
- “How Are Questions Written for NCBE’s Exams? Part One: Two Multiple-Choice Question Drafters Share the Process”

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