# NextGen Bar Exam Fact Sheet

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## About the NextGen Bar Exam

* Set to debut in July 2026, the NextGen bar exam will test a broad range of foundational lawyering skills, utilizing a focused set of clearly identified fundamental legal concepts and principles needed in today’s practice of law.
* Fundamental concepts and principles: civil procedure, contract law, evidence, torts, business associations, constitutional law, criminal law, real property. Family law will be added to this list starting with the July 2028 bar exam.
* Foundational lawyering skills: legal research, legal writing, issue spotting and analysis, investigation and evaluation, client counseling and advising, negotiation and dispute resolution, client relationship and management.

Visit [www.ncbex.org/exams/nextgen/content-scope](http://www.ncbex.org/exams/nextgen/content-scope) for detailed outlines of the legal doctrine and skills that will be tested on the NextGen bar exam and [www.ncbex.org/exams/nextgen/sample-questions](http://www.ncbex.org/exams/nextgen/sample-questions) for sample questions.

* The skills and concepts to be tested were developed through a multi-year, nationwide legal practice analysis, focused on the most important knowledge and skills for newly licensed lawyers (defined as lawyers within their first three years in practice). The practice analysis surveyed over 14,000 attorneys, focusing on both seasoned attorneys supervising newly licensed attorneys and newly licensed attorneys themselves.
* In considering the breadth of topics to be covered within each concept and skill area, a 21-member content scope committee comprised of law professors and deans, practicing attorneys, and judges primarily considered the following three factors:
* Frequency: How often is a newly licensed lawyer likely to encounter the topic in general entry-level practice (loosely defined as solo practice or working at a full-service law firm)?
* Universality: How likely is a newly licensed lawyer to encounter the topic in more specialized types of entry-level practice?
  + - * Risk: How likely is it that there will be serious consequences if a newly licensed lawyer does not have any knowledge of the topic when it arises?
* In addition to the factors listed above, for the subject of constitutional law the content scope committee also considered lawyers’ roles as custodians of the US Constitution.
* Designed to balance the skills and knowledge needed in litigation and transactional legal practice, the exam will reflect many of the key changes that law schools are making today, building on the successes of clinical legal education programs, alternative dispute resolution programs, and legal writing and analysis programs.
* The NextGen bar exam will be administered over one and a half days, with two, three-hour sessions on day one and one, three-hour session on day two. Jurisdictions that administer their own local law components may elect to extend day two for that purpose.
* The NextGen bar exam is currently under development utilizing a rigorous process that includes multiple phases of pilot, field, and prototype testing and statistical analysis. The development process is being conducted in accordance with the same best practices in licensure exam development utilized by a broad range of exams, including those for medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, engineering, accounting, and other licensed professions.
* Questions for the NextGen bar exam are written by diverse teams of law professors and deans, practicing attorneys, and judges drawn from jurisdictions throughout the US.
* Like the current bar exam, the NextGen bar exam will be administered, and the written portions graded, by the individual US jurisdictions. In partnership with Surpass Assessment ([www.surpass.com](http://www.surpass.com)), NCBE will provide the technology platform to deliver the exam and conduct the grading, taking advantage of the latest advances in testing best practices and technology.
* The exam will be taken on examinees’ own laptops at in-person, proctored testing locations. A secure, online assessment platform will be used to present the exam and to collect examinees’ responses. The platform will offer a range of assistive technologies and custom-created formats for examinees who require testing accommodations.
* The NextGen bar exam will be equated to ensure comparability across administrations and between jurisdictions and can be paired with additional bar exam components developed independently by the administering jurisdictions. The NextGen bar exam may be used by individual jurisdictions as the basis for scaling their own bar exam components.
* The NextGen bar exam will take the place of the current Uniform Bar Examination (UBE) components for purposes of inter-jurisdictional score portability.
* For a list of jurisdictions that have already announced their intention to administer and more information on the NextGen bar exam, visit [www.ncbex.org/exams/nextgen](http://www.ncbex.org/exams/nextgen).

## About the Current Bar Exam

* All 56 US jurisdictions (all US states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands) administer a bar exam as part of their requirements for licensure to practice law. 54 of those jurisdictions use one or more of the bar exam components developed by NCBE.
* The bar exam components developed by NCBE are the Multistate Essay Examination (MEE), which consists of six 30-minute essay questions; the Multistate Performance Test (MPT), which consists of two 90-minute items; and the MBE, a six-hour, 200-question multiple-choice exam.
* Some jurisdictions include jurisdiction-specific components in their bar exams (e.g., locally authored essay questions or performance tests).
* The MEE, MPT, and MBE are developed by NCBE in collaboration with teams of law professors and deans, practicing attorneys, and judges drawn from jurisdictions throughout the US. Each of these components is subjected to external expert review, bias review, and statistical analysis to ensure that all test takers have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The content of the NCBE-developed exam components is regularly reviewed for currency and relevance to bar admissions and early practice; the most recent study of bar exam content was conducted in 2018 and 2019 and also forms the basis for the NextGen bar exam.
* Effective with the July 2026 bar exam, the following subjects will no longer be tested on the MEE: Conflict of Laws, Family Law, Trusts and Estates, and Secured Transactions. Family Law and Trusts and Estates will instead be tested on the MPT. This change will align MEE subjects with the subject matter for the NextGen bar exam.
* The MEE, MPT, and MBE will no longer be available for administration after the February 2028 bar exam.

## About the Uniform Bar Examination

* The UBE is coordinated by NCBE and comprised of the MEE, the MPT, and the MBE. It is uniformly administered, graded, and scored and results in a portable score that can be transferred between participating UBE jurisdictions.
* The UBE was first administered in 2011. As of February 2023, 41 jurisdictions participate in the UBE program. For a list of all UBE jurisdictions, visit [www.ncbex.org/exams/ube/](https://www.ncbex.org/exams/ube/).
* Over 45,000 candidates took the UBE in 2023. Through December 31, 2023, nearly 280,000 UBE scores have been earned and over 54,500 UBE scores have been transferred, obviating the need for candidates to re-take the bar exam in one or more additional jurisdictions.
* The NextGen bar exam will take the place of the current UBE components for purposes of inter-jurisdictional score portability.

## About the National Conference of Bar Examiners

* The National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE), headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin, is a not-for-profit corporation founded in 1931.
* NCBE promotes fairness, integrity, and best practices in bar admissions for the benefit and protection of the public, in pursuit of its vision of a competent, ethical, and diverse legal profession.
* Best known for developing bar exam content used by 54 US jurisdictions, NCBE serves 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.
* In 2026, NCBE will launch the next generation of the bar examination, ensuring that the exam continues to test the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent entry-level legal practice in a changing profession.
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