

Frequently Asked Questions About the Bar Exam

Disclaimer: If you need any assistance preparing for the bar, please reach out to Academic Excellence. MHSL has students who take the bar in nearly every single state and our team is committed to helping every student be successful on their exam. We understand that this is a stressful time for students, and in light of COVID-19 and new test restrictions, things are even more difficult. With that said, we may not have EVERY answer because your state bar may not have made a decision regarding testing, testing sites, dates for tests, etc. If you have any particular questions or questions not addressed in this FAQ, **please check your state bar website for specific details.** The fastest way to find your state bar website is to do a quick google search: “{State Name} board of law examiners bar exam COVID.”

- What do I do if I can't have scratch paper?
 - If you take your exam in-person, there's room in the test booklet to jot down notes and make an outline - like the backs of the pages, and there are often also blank pages at the end of the MPT and MEEs.
 - If you take your exam remotely, it will be difficult, though not impossible, to work the exam without scratch paper. When working the multiple-choice questions, you will need to retain the information in the fact pattern in your brain and your analysis as you work your way to the question and answer choices. Do not deviate from the method we teach even though your exam is remote. Do not read the question until you have read and analyzed the fact pattern. Do not read the answer choices until you have determined the answer for that question and the reason for that answer. If you need help with the multiple-choice test-taking method, please contact us. When working essay and MPT questions, you should read through the fact pattern and other materials while you toggle back and forth to where you will write your answer. Jot down notes from the questions and outline where you will write your answer as you work through the materials of the problem.
- What do I do if I can't write on the exam?
 - If you cannot write on anything, we recommend taking notes on the word document where you will write your answer. You can use these notes as an outline/template for your answer and/or delete these notes when you're done.
 - We also recommend doing practice tests under actual test conditions. So, if you cannot write on anything during the bar exam, do not write on anything while preparing for the bar exam. Remember to check with your local state bar for details regarding your specific test.
- What if the bar exam is administered using different technology than I am used to?
 - If possible, we recommend downloading the testing program prior to the test and making sure it works for you and getting familiar with how it works. If you cannot download the testing program prior to the exam, look for an online tutorial or overview of the program.
 - What if I don't have internet? If you do not have internet, then try to pick a study place with internet like the library or a coffee shop.
 - If possible, try to get the internet for the months you will be studying or if your phone can be used as a hotspot, you can use that for internet access.
 - Some internet service providers offer free or discounted internet service during COVID-10, so research offerings from providers in your area.

- What if there is a lack of lighting in my house?
 - If there is a lack of lighting in your house, we recommend getting a lamp or light bulbs that provide better lighting specifically in the area you will be studying most.
- What if I have a lack of study space during the bar prep period?
 - As you have learned throughout law school, and particularly now, adapting to all kinds of situations is sometimes necessary for success. If you cannot find an alternative study space like a library or coffee shop, then you must make do with what you have. Try clearing off some space and designating an area specifically for bar prep, so it won't get cluttered with other items and can be away from the rest of the activities in the house.
 - Often, a space near a window will seem bigger than it is and has the secondary purpose of providing much needed light.
 - Let others in your household know that this is your bar study area and you will need peace and quiet while studying.
- What about bathroom breaks and staring at the screen?
 - If you know you will need frequent bathroom breaks, you need to make sure you account for the extra time it will take to use the restroom while taking practice exams and the actual bar exam. Try to refrain from drinking too many liquids the day of the test and make sure you take a restroom break every time you are given a break during the test.
 - If you have a medical condition, be sure to check with your local bar regarding accommodations.
 - If staring at the screen has been very strenuous for your eyes, some find relief in blue light glasses for screens. Those can be found on Amazon.
- I am concerned about wearing a mask for a long time during an in-person exam, what do I do?
 - Unfortunately, because of COVID-19, a mask will likely be required for the exam. Start getting used to wearing a mask now by doing practice exams wearing a mask. This will get you used to the actual testing conditions.
 - If you have a medical condition that precludes you from wearing a mask, be sure to check with your state bar administrators to see what kind of accommodations can be made. Be prepared to provide medical information for any requested accommodations.
- What are each of the bar prep companies doing to address COVID-19?
 - **Themis** created a dual track system in some of their courses to accommodate for states that administered the exam in two different dates. Students were able to switch between the two tracks based on instructions from the board of law examiners without losing their progress in the course. Full modifications were made of courses for any structural or content changes the state implemented. Specifically, for IN, MI, and FL the substance and the short answer content has been changed to accommodate their changes. The simulated exam has changed in states like CA to reflect their new segmented format. MPTs are available as PDF links so that students do not have to use their printed book (to accommodate for those taking the exam online). Additionally, the entire course can be completed online, preparing students for the possibility of a remote exam in which they cannot look anywhere but their computer screen. Constant communication with students seeking guidance and advice as they navigate last-minute changes and uncertainty regarding their bar exam

date and format. Themis plans to remain flexible, accommodating and supportive during future bar exams as they continually adapt to this ever-changing landscape of legal education.

- **Barbri** has digitized all their books and posted them within the Personal Study Plan. They have several new introductions and lectures that address taking essays either in person or online. They are also currently recording a new MPT lecture that addresses what you need to know for an online exam, how to approach and succeed.
- Each **Kaplan** student has a team of Regional Directors who reach out to students during bar prep generally twice per week with emails and update them with any changes. After the change to no scrap paper, Kaplan included a course update that students see when they log in alerting them to the new rule. In addition, emails to every student registered to take the bar in that state outlining what changed and advice to students going forward. Hold "Home-room," sessions were created in various states, once per week, that continued past the July exam and onward for students who had their bar moved. Various speakers such as Adam Maze held weekly hour-long sessions going over various topics such as "How to prepare in the new environment," and "tuning out distractions," as well as time for Q/A for students about specific changes. Students are always able to utilize the "ask an expert" function anytime to get more feedback. Homeroom will continue moving forward as well, this allows another avenue for students to be able to reach experts in a live setting to get updates on any changes. With regard specifically to not having scratch paper and only looking at a screen, Kaplan was able to adapt quickly and their entire course can be done online (on-demand), if needed. Students were advised of the rule and recommended they utilize the online questions, essays and learn to practice without the physical books. Kaplan has and will make sure going forward that whatever changes occur with the various state bars, students are able to prepare in the same way as they would taking the bar on test day.