

Dear Upcoming Bar Passer,

Students always ask me: how can I pass the bar exam on the first try?

To answer this question, I've written the recipe for success that has proven effective time and time again. If you follow this recipe, you will be very well-positioned to pass the bar exam on the first try. Now, it's not an easy recipe, but it is doable, and you'll be glad you did it when you get your bar results stating you passed.

Before I share my recipe, I want to emphasize what I have learned working with thousands of law students over the past 12 years: the bar exam is not something to take lightly.

It's a big deal, and it's hard. There's no way to sugar coat that.

It's not something everyone should automatically do immediately after they graduate. For some, it makes more sense to wait for the next administration of the bar exam to ensure adequate time can be spent on preparation. If you are not 200% committed and able to put in the extensive time and difficult work to pass the bar exam, I would recommend you wait. When you are not 200% committed and you take the exam, your likelihood of passing is very low. What's worse, if you don't pass the first time, it will hurt your confidence, which is key to passing the bar exam.

Without further ado, here's the recipe for success.



## Recipe for Bar Success: 400 – 80 – 3000 – 6 – 20

- Devote at LEAST **400** hours to bar prep. This is a floor, and not a ceiling. Some students will require 500 or even 600 hours to pass.
  - If you don't have 400 hours between now and the bar exam, you should SERIOUSLY consider delaying your bar exam until the next administration. Do it right the first time!
  - Be creative when planning your time –any 20-minute block of time in which you are free should be a window in which you study.
- Complete at least **80%** of your commercial course. There is an extremely high and direct correlation between bar course completion and bar passage. 80% is a bare minimum to pass.
  - Themis Start Dates for 2022:
    - February Exam
      - Early Access: November 17, 2021
      - Regular Start Date: December 13, 2021
    - July Exam
      - Early Access: March 23, 2022
      - Regular Start Date: May 16, 2022
- Do at least **3000** MBE Questions – **AND** debrief all of them with the MBE Worksheet (linked below).
  - The MBE only tests black and white areas of law, so if you do 3000 questions and debrief them thoroughly, you'll encounter almost all possible areas of questioning and be prepared.
  - You MUST watch the video and read the handout on how to approach the MBE – students who follow the method see significant improvement in their scores.
    - <https://mitchellhamline.edu/academic-excellence/bar-exam-resources/>
      - Password for all videos is MHSL062017!
  - Complete the MBE Worksheet for EVERY question you do. This is how you debrief these questions.
    - [MBE Questions Worksheet.docx](#)
    - If you are taking the Bar Prep Strategies: MBE & MEE course, start making your MBE Worksheets while in that course. The material covered in the Bar Prep Strategies: MBE & MEE course is a portion of what you will cover in your commercial course, so putting these materials together during that course will give you a huge head start on your bar prep. Also, you should include the material from Crush the Bar and Ahead of the Curve (discussed below) in your MBE Worksheets.
  - Use the NCBE's MBE Subject Matter Outline as a study guide - <https://www.ncbex.org/pdfviewer/?file=%2Fdmsdocument%2F226>
- Do at least **6** MEE Essays in **ALL 13 MEE** subject areas with thorough debriefs. Complete an MEE Self-Assessment (linked below) for EVERY MEE you do.
  - Yep, that's 78 total essays. Lucky for you, we have a bank of MEEs for you to use, and we have a self-assessment for you to use too!
  - [MEEs By Subject](#)
  - [MEE Self-Assessment - Blank.docx](#)
  - Use the NCBE's MEE Subject Matter Outline as a study guide and outline template - <https://www.ncbex.org/pdfviewer/?file=%2Fdmsdocument%2F227>
  - At a minimum, you need to write out 2 full essays per subject, and you must work through an additional 4 MEEs per subject where you spot the issues and prepare an outline of the answer you would write for each issue. You MUST debrief all 6 essays even if you didn't write full answers.

Do at least **20**, yes 20, MPTs AND thoroughly debrief them!

- This will ensure that you have sufficient practice in the most common types of MPTs (briefs and memos) but also have exposure to more unusual types. This will build your confidence and reduce your anxiety. Lucky for you again, we have a bank of MPTs for you to use, and we have a self-assessment for you to use too!
  - [Unsorted MPTs](#)
- Complete an MPT Self-Assessment for EVERY MPT you do: [MPT Self-Assessment.docx](#)
- At a minimum, you need to write out 10 full MPTs, and you must work through an additional 10 MPTs where you spot the issues and prepare an outline of the answer you would write. You MUST debrief all 20 MPTs.

- **Be organized!**
  - You should have a Bar Prep Binder with 13 tabs (UBE jurisdictions) – one tab for each bar-tested subject
    - Use dividers that have pockets
    - Each section should have your outline for that subject that you prepared yourself and concept sheets that you prepared yourself. In each pocket of each divider, you should have an MBE worksheet for the MBE subjects, and an MEE worksheet for each MEE subject. You should also have any flashcards that you prepare yourself.
      - The whole point of making an outline, concept sheet, or flashcard is for you to learn through that process. Buying these items or using someone else's materials deprives you of the opportunity to learn through doing the work yourself.
    - I like the binder because then you can just have it with you everywhere and anytime you have 20 minutes, study the material in the binder!
    - If you are taking the Bar Prep Strategies: MBE & MEE course, start making your binder while in that course. The material covered in the Bar Prep Strategies: MBE & MEE course is a portion of what you will cover in your commercial course, so putting these materials together during that course will give you a huge head start on your bar prep. You should also include the material from Crush the Bar and Ahead of the Curve (discussed below) in your binder.
- **Create YOUR OWN:**
  - **Outlines**
    - Examples - [Prof Sonbol's Bar Exam Outlines 2008.pdf](#)
    - If you are taking the Bar Prep Strategies: MBE & MEE course, start making your outlines while in that course. The material covered in the Bar Prep Strategies: MBE & MEE course is a portion of what you will cover in your commercial course, so putting these materials together during that course will give you a huge head start on your bar prep. You should also include the material from Crush the Bar and Ahead of the Curve (discussed below) in your outlines.
  - **Concept Sheets**
    - These are one-pagers on concrete concepts. You should have a one-page concept sheet on things like Negligence, Hearsay, Diversity Jurisdiction, etc.
    - This is just another way to outline with one concept per sheet – sticking to that limit will help you crunch a single concept into one sheet and into your brain.
    - If you are taking the Bar Prep Strategies: MBE & MEE course, start making your concept sheets while in that course. The material covered in the Bar Prep Strategies: MBE & MEE course is a portion of what you will cover in your commercial course, so putting these materials together during that course will give you a huge head start on your bar prep. You should also include the material from Crush the Bar and Ahead of the Curve (discussed below) in your concept sheets.
  - **Flashcards**
    - These should be color-coded and bound on a ring – Amazon sells things like this: [Flashcards](#). Buy a pack with no more than five colors of notecards. For each MBE subject, divide the concepts in that subject into no more than five categories – one color for each category. For example, torts can be divided into the categories of intentional torts, negligence, strict liability, and other – that's four colors of notecards, one color for each category. Within each category, use the first card to write the general rule and elements. The next cards should further elaborate on each of the elements, detail exceptions, caveats, etc.. The process of dividing each subject into categories, and then organizing the concepts within each category will help you learn the material.
    - If you are taking the Bar Prep Strategies: MBE & MEE course, start making your flashcards while in that course. The material covered in the Bar Prep Strategies: MBE & MEE course is a portion of what you will cover in your commercial course, so putting these materials together during that course will give you a huge head start on your bar prep. You should also include the material from Crush the Bar and Ahead of the Curve (discussed below) in your flashcards.
- **Watch AE Bar Prep Videos and Review AE Bar Exam Handouts**
  - <https://mitchellhamline.edu/academic-excellence/bar-exam-resources/>
    - Password for all videos is MHSL062017!
  - Watch all videos and review all handouts. You can do this before you graduate, and you should do this again after you finish your classes in your final semester.

- **Complete the Ahead of the Curve Program** – This early bar prep program is designed to be completed during your final semester, and ideally at the same time as BSP: MBE & MEE for spring graduates. Ahead of the Curve digs deeper into bar exam skills and substance. AotC students get assigned to a 1:1 bar prep tutor early in their final semester. The AotC program is designed to be completed on your own, but once completed you will move directly into 1:1 tutoring to continue building bar exam skills. You will automatically be emailed at the start of your final semester and invited to participate in AotC. We only know it's your final semester if you've submitted your intent to graduate form, so please submit that on time. If you haven't submitted your intent to graduate form, or you've already begun your final semester and haven't heard from us, please email Maggie Eilertson, [maggie.eilertson@mitchellhamline.edu](mailto:maggie.eilertson@mitchellhamline.edu), to sign-up for Ahead of the Curve.
- **Complete the Crush the Bar Workshop Series** - workshop series that goes through doctrine and practice questions with Mitchell Hamline Professors. Watch each topic and do the questions at the same time as you cover that topic in your commercial course for a deeper-dive and practice that will pay off! Alternatively, you can complete the workshop during your final semester.
  - [Crush the Bar \(Students\) July 2021](#)
- **Utilize the Bar Prep Resources Canvas Course** – you are automatically enrolled in this course during your final semester as soon as we get a list of who is graduating from the Registrar. If you graduated or are graduating soon and don't have access to the course, please email Maggie Eilertson, [maggie.eilertson@mitchellhamline.edu](mailto:maggie.eilertson@mitchellhamline.edu), and she will get you access.
  - This is repository of past MH courses on all bar subjects. You should be using these courses as refreshers/review/supplemental instruction on each topic as you work that topic in your commercial bar course.
    - For example, if negligence is unclear during the unit on torts, go to the torts class in the Bar Prep Resources course on Canvas and watch those lectures.
- **Seek out additional resources during your bar studies!**
  - Still struggling to understand a certain topic?
    - Try Studicata!
      - They have “Free Learning” resources where you can type a topic into the search bar and watch videos on your topic. They also have resources for purchase. If the videos are working for you, buy them!
      - [www.studicata.com](http://www.studicata.com)
    - Emanuel's Crunchtime
      - You can purchase these for all bar subjects on Amazon or directly from Aspen Publishers. The Crunchtime series has great flowcharts, graphs, practice problems, etc.
- **Practice Like it is the Real Thing, so the Real Thing Feels like Practice**
  - **Practice Bar Exams**
    - We have a licensing agreement with NCBE for four 100-question MBE practice sets and you can purchase them from MH for \$15 each. (\$60 for all four sets.) Email [Jennifer.Ticcioni@mitchellhamline.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Ticcioni@mitchellhamline.edu) to get the questions. Do this sometime after you finish your classes in your final semester.
    - Use these sets along with MEEs and MPTs from the Academic Excellence folders above to do two complete two-day practice bar exams. During the month of the bar exam, you **MUST** do two practice bars exactly how your bar exam will be. For example, in a UBE jurisdiction, a practice test would look like this:
      - Day 1
      - 3 hours – 2 MPTs
      - 1 hour lunch break
      - 3 hours – 6 MEEs
      - Day 2
      - 3 hours – 100 MBEs
      - 1 hour lunch break
      - 3 hours – 100 MBEs
    - Getting practice under test-like conditions (full two days, on paper, wearing a mask, limited breaks, etc.) is essential!
      - If you are taking the bar in a non-UBE jurisdiction and need help tracking down past bar exam questions, please email [maggie.eilertson@mitchellhamline.edu](mailto:maggie.eilertson@mitchellhamline.edu) and she can help you!

- Do your two practice bars one week apart, and at least two weeks before the real exam. Do one practice bar, then debrief the whole exam, updating your outlines, concept sheets, flashcards, etc. After the debrief, study, and do the second one, then repeat the debrief and study process.
- **Get help!!**
  - If you are not scoring as well on your practice exams, MBEs, MEEs, or MPTs as you'd like, reach out to Academic Excellence immediately!! We have a whole team of tutors ready to help you prepare for the bar exam!
    - Email [maggie.eilertson@mitchellhamline.edu](mailto:maggie.eilertson@mitchellhamline.edu) to get matched with a tutor.
    - Get everything you need and go full force ahead this time so you maximize your chances of not having to take the bar again.