

ADMISSIONS POLICIES OF THE WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
Bar Exam, Admission by Motion and UBE Transfer Applicants

Under the authority of, and consistent with, the Admission and Practice Rules, the Board of Governors of the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) has adopted the following Admissions Policies in administering those rules. Adopted July 1, 2012. Amended effective December 1, 2015.

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS AND DEFINITIONS

A. Applications

Applications to take the Bar examination and for admission to practice law in Washington must be completed online and submitted electronically, except that permission to submit an application in a paper format may be requested and granted for good cause shown.

B. Definitions

“Approved Law School” means a law school approved by the Board of Governors. Only those law schools approved by the American Bar Association are approved by the Board of Governors. A list of ABA approved law schools is available on the ABA website.

“Attorney Applicant” means a person who, at the time of filing the application, has ever been admitted to practice law in any jurisdiction other than Washington.

“General Applicant” means a person who, at the time of filing the application, has never been admitted to practice law in any jurisdiction except for Washington.

“Foreign Applicant” means a person who has ever been admitted to the practice of law in any foreign jurisdiction or has a first degree in law that was not earned in the U.S.

“UBE Transfer Applicant” means a person who has obtained a passing UBE score (≥ 270) from another UBE jurisdiction no more than 40 months prior to the time of filing the application and has arranged, through NCBE score services, to have their scores forwarded to WSBA admissions.

II. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Application Submission Policy

All Applicants must complete and file with the WSBA, within the filing deadlines specified below, the following:

- a completed application form in the form required by the Board of Governors;
- Certificates of Good Moral Character, dated within 5 months of the application date and completed by two attorneys admitted to practice law in any U.S. jurisdiction or the foreign jurisdiction in which the applicant is admitted to practice law; and

- an Authorization and Release form. The form must be signed and dated within 5 months of the application date.

In addition, Attorney Applicants must file:

- a Certificate of Good Standing from each jurisdiction in which the applicant is admitted (Federal Courts exempt). Certificates of Good Standing for Attorney Applicants and Foreign Applicants admitted to practice law must be issued by the admitting authority (i.e., State Bar or highest state court) in each jurisdiction where the applicant has been admitted. The certificate must be signed and dated within 5 months of the application date.

The responsibility for full disclosure rests entirely upon the applicant. Applicants should review the Admission and Practice Rules relating to character and fitness (APR 7 and 20-24) for complete details with regard to investigations and duties of the applicant.

B. Filing Deadlines

Applications for General and Attorney Applicants are accepted beginning February 1 for the summer exam and September 1 for the winter exam. Applications for Foreign Applicants are accepted beginning September 1 for the summer exam and February 1 for the winter exam. Filing deadlines for applications to take the Washington Bar examination are as follows:

General and U.S. Attorney Applicants:

Examination	Applications Accepted	First Deadline	Late Filing Deadline	Failed Previous WA Exam Deadline With No Late Fee
Summer Exam	February 1	March 5	April 5	May 5
Winter Exam	September 1	October 5	November 5	October 5

Foreign Applicants:

Examination	Applications Accepted	First Deadline	Late Filing Deadline	Failed Previous WA Exam Deadline With No Late Fee
Summer Exam	September 1 (year prior)	October 5	November 5	October 5
Winter Exam	February 1 (year prior)	March 5	April 5	May 5

The deadline will be the next business day when a deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday. Late filing requires payment of a \$300 late filing fee. No applications will be accepted after the late filing deadline except for applicants who failed the most recent past winter Washington exam and are applying for the following summer Washington exam; those applicants are not required to pay the late filing fee and the deadline will be May 5.

Applications, including payment, Authorization and Release form and Certificate of Good Moral Character, must be filed online by 11:59 P.M. (PST/PDT) the day of the application deadline. Payments by check must be received or postmarked by the application deadline.

Payments received or postmarked after the first deadline will incur a late filing fee. Applications will not be accepted if payment is received or postmarked after the final deadline.

C. Other Deadlines

File all requested and/or additional items18 days prior to first day of exam.
ExamSoft (laptop) Registration.....18 days prior to first day of exam.
Change of exam method.....18 days prior to first day of exam.
Change of exam location18 days prior to first day of exam.
Request special needs for exam room18 days prior to first day of exam.
Withdraw from exam with refund.....60 days prior to first day of exam.
Request ADA accommodations80 days prior to first day of exam.
UBE Transfer Applicants.....No deadline, may apply at any time.
Admission by MotionNo deadline, may apply at any time.

III. FEES

A. Fee Schedule

(1) General Applicants:

Applicants not previously admitted to the practice of law in any jurisdiction..... \$585

(2) Attorney Applicants:

Applicants previously admitted to the practice of law in any jurisdiction..... \$620

All bank card transactions are subject to a separate non-refundable transaction fee of 2.5%. There is no transaction for payments by check. Payments by check must be received or postmarked by the application deadline. Payments received or postmarked after the first deadline will incur a late filing fee as outlined in section II (B).

(3) NCBE Investigation Fee: Applications for all Attorney Applicants and Foreign Applicants are referred to the National Conference of Bar Examiners for verification and investigation of the information in the application. NCBE fees are set by the NCBE and are nonrefundable.

<http://www.ncbex.org/character-and-fitness/jurisdiction/wa>. Attorney Applicants and Foreign Applicants must make a separate payment and submit two (2) **original** Authorization and Release forms to the NCBE.

B. Withdrawals and Refunds

For all applicants there is a \$300 non-refundable administrative processing fee. An applicant must request to withdraw an application at least 60 days prior to the date of the examination for a partial refund. The WSBA will issue a refund of the fee less the administrative fee. Any late filing fees paid, and any investigation costs are nonrefundable. No refunds will be issued for withdrawals requested less than 60 days prior to the date of the exam. Applicants forfeit all fees if they do not show up for the exam.

If there are extraordinary circumstances that prevent an applicant from taking the examination (e.g., a serious medical emergency, death in the immediate family, significant health problems, house fire), a written request must be delivered to the WSBA within 18 days after the exam in order to receive a partial refund as set forth above.

IV. CHARACTER & FITNESS REVIEW

All applicants are subject to a character and fitness review prior to being admitted to practice law in Washington State. Admission may be withheld pending a hearing before the Character and Fitness Board and final determination regarding whether the applicants have met their burden of proving that they are of good moral character and fit to practice law and have met the Essential Eligibility Requirements. See APR 20-24.3. Factors considered by Admissions staff and Bar Counsel when determining whether an applicant should be referred to the Character and Fitness Board are set forth in APR 21(a).

Washington requires resolution of all character and fitness issues at least 60 days prior to sitting for the bar exam. Applicants with unresolved character and fitness issues will not be permitted to sit for the exam. Therefore, applicants who disclose any information that may raise an issue of character or fitness are advised to file their applications early in the registration period. Early filing does not guarantee all issues will be resolved 60 days prior to the exam.

The WSBA Character and Fitness Board will not consider applications from attorney applicants including foreign attorney applicants who are currently under disciplinary suspension from another jurisdiction in which they are admitted to practice law.

V. NCBE REPORT REQUIREMENT

Attorney applicants and applicants who graduated from a foreign law school are required to pay an investigation fee to the National Conference of Bar Examiners. All attorney and foreign applicants will have their applications investigated and verified by the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE). Attorney applicants will not be allowed to sit for the exam if the WSBA does not receive a report back from the NCBE at least 18 days prior to the first day of the exam. Attorney applicants are advised that they may not be able to sit for the exam for which they applied. Foreign attorneys and applicants with a foreign law degree must apply during the application period for the exam prior to the one they want to take (see Application Filing Deadline).

All applicants will be given the option to transfer their registration fees and application to the next exam, if the character and fitness review is not complete or the NCBE report is not received by the appropriate deadline. Applicants may also choose to withdraw from the exam and receive a partial refund if the request is made at least 60 days prior to the first day of the exam. Applications with a completed NCBE report may be used for two consecutive exam cycles after which a new investigation will be required.

VI. APPLICANTS REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS UNDER THE ADA

Any applicant with a disability for which he or she needs reasonable accommodations must request such accommodation in writing at least 80 days prior to the examination date. However, such reasonable accommodation may not compromise the integrity or security of the Bar examination or affect the standards set for the examination. An applicant granted accommodations must agree to and accept the terms and conditions of the accommodations no less than 60 days prior to the first day of the examination.

VII. SPECIAL REQUESTS FOR THE EXAM ROOM

For good cause shown, applicants may be permitted to bring otherwise prohibited items into the exam room. Examples of items are: pillows/lumbar supports, ergonomic chairs, book stand, wrist rest, medication, external keyboard or mouse, and religious headgear. In addition, applicants may request a specific seating location in the exam room due to a medical condition.

All requests must be made on the online admissions site using the special request tool at least 18 days prior to the first day of the exam. All requests must be supported (if applicable) by a doctor's note.

VIII. LAPTOP USE AND EXAMSOFT

Applicants requesting to use a laptop computer for the MEE and MPT must register, pay for, and download software from ExamSoft. Applicants using a laptop are required to purchase and download the Examsoft software for each administration of the bar exam, even if they have used it in the past. Fees paid to ExamSoft are nonrefundable and nontransferable. Applicants who will be using a laptop to take the exam must sign a waiver of liability on exam day. Applicants that do not purchase and download the software by 18 days prior will handwrite the exam.

IX. EXAMINATION PROVISIONS

A. Examination – How Conducted

1) The Bar examination is conducted by and under the direction of the WSBA Board of Governors who appoint a Board of active members of the State Bar known as the Board of Bar Examiners (BOBE). The same examination is given to all applicants.

(2) All applicants must pass the Uniform Bar Exam prepared and coordinated by the National Conference of Bar Examiners. The Uniform Bar Exam (UBE) consists of the Multistate Bar Exam (MBE),

Multistate Essay Exam (MEE) and Multistate Performance Test (MPT) questions. The UBE is administered over two days in accordance with the procedures established by the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE). Washington's UBE minimum pass score is 270.

B. Additional Requirements

(1) All applicants seeking admission on the basis of a UBE score (exam or transfer) must pass the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE). The MPRE is administered by the Law School Admission Council on behalf of the NCBE. A passing score on the MPRE must be acquired no earlier than three years prior to and no later than 40 months after the date of the administration of the UBE in which the applicant achieves a passing score. . Washington's MPRE minimum pass score is 85.

(2) All applicants must pass the Washington Law Component (WLC). The WLC is comprised of online materials and an online multiple choice test based on areas or subjects of law that are specific to Washington State. The Board of Bar Examiners is responsible for the content of the WLC and shall publish the Washington state specific materials for applicants. The WLC is self-administered by applicants and is available to applicants after filing the application for the bar exam. Applicants must pass the WLC no later than 40 months from the date of the administration of the UBE in which the applicant achieves a passing score. The WLC minimum pass score is 80% correct. If an applicant fails the UBE or withdraws from the UBE after taking the WLC, that applicant must retake the WLC after applying for the next UBE administration.

C. Administration and Grading

(1) Administration

The Board of Governors shall provide the Board of Bar Examiners with administrative or other assistance, as the Board of Governors in its discretion deems necessary. The Board of Bar Examiners is responsible for the grading of the MEE and MPT questions on the UBE. The Board of Bar Examiners shall, as soon as practicable and within any guidelines prepared by the NCBE, certify the scores on the MEE and MPT portions for all applicants who have taken the examination.

(2) Non-identity Grading

Grading examinations shall be strictly anonymous. All information matching names and numbers of the applicants shall be kept in the custody of the Board of Governors, or the designee, until all examinations have been graded and each examination has been given either a pass or fail grade by applicant number only.

(3) Uniformity of Grading

In order to assure fairness and uniformity in grading, the Board of Bar Examiners shall follow NCBE-prescribed standards for grading to be used by all graders.

D. Examination Results – Notification

(1) Upon completion of grading and certification, the Board of Governors shall cause each applicant to be notified of the result of the examination. In addition, the names of successful

applicants shall be posted at the headquarters of the Washington State Bar Association and on the WSBA website. All results shall be reported to the NCBE in accordance with procedures established by the NCBE. Scaled scores will also be reported to an applicant's law school.

(2) All applicants will be provided with the scaled written (MEE+MPT) score, scaled MBE score, and total scaled UBE score. Unsuccessful applicants will receive copies of their written essay and performance exam questions and answers and written raw scores. No other raw scores, results information or examination materials will be provided to the applicants.

E. Review and Appeal

There is no review or appeal of final examination results.

F. Repeating the Examination

Unsuccessful applicants may reapply and retake the exam in the same manner as any other applicant.

X. UBE TRANSFER APPLICANT PROVISIONS

Unless specifically stated in this section, the same policies above apply to applicants transferring a UBE score from another jurisdiction.

A. Application Deadline

UBE transfer applications may be filed with the WSBA at any time and must have an acceptable UBE transfer score at the time of application.

B. UBE Transfer Score

The UBE score must be at least 270 to transfer to Washington. The score is transferable into Washington for up to 40 months after the date of the administration of the UBE in which the score was earned.

C. Exam Provisions (MPRE & WLC)

UBE transfer applicants must comply with subsection B of section IX; except that the Washington Law Component (WLC) must be passed within one year of filing the application.

D. Application Expiration

UBE transfer applicants must complete all requirements for admission within one year of the date of filing the application with the WSBA.

XI. ADMISSION BY MOTION APPLICANT PROVISIONS

Unless specifically stated below, the same policies above apply to applicants for admission by motion.

A. Application Deadline

Applications for admission by motion, may be filed with the WSBA at any time.

B. Application Expiration

An applicant seeking admission by motion must complete all requirements for admission, including passing the Washington Law Component within one year of the date of filing the application with the WSBA.