



# *Understanding the* **UNIFORM BAR EXAMINATION**

## **What Is the UBE?**

The Uniform Bar Examination (UBE) is prepared and coordinated by the National Conference of Bar Examiners to test knowledge and skills that every lawyer should be able to demonstrate prior to becoming licensed to practice law. It is comprised of the Multistate Essay Examination (MEE), two Multistate Performance Test (MPT) tasks, and the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE). It is uniformly administered, graded, and scored by user jurisdictions and results in a portable score.

The UBE is administered over two days, with the MBE given on the last Wednesday of February and July and the MEE and MPT given on the Tuesday prior to that. The MEE and MPT scores are scaled to the MBE, with the MBE weighted 50%, the MEE 30%, and the MPT 20%.

## **Jurisdictions that use the UBE continue to**

- decide who may sit for the bar exam and who will be admitted to practice.
- determine underlying educational requirements.
- make all character and fitness decisions.
- set their own policies regarding the number of times candidates may retake the bar examination.
- make ADA decisions.
- grade the MEE and MPT.
- set their own pre-release regrading policies.
- assess candidate knowledge of jurisdiction-specific content through a separate test, course, or some combination of the two if the jurisdiction chooses.
- accept MBE scores earned in a previous examination for purposes of making local admission decisions if they wish. Note, however, that candidates must sit for the entire UBE in a single administration to earn a portable UBE score.
- set their own passing scores.
- determine how long incoming UBE scores will be accepted.
- maintain the security of test content and provide appropriate testing conditions by administering the UBE at specified times and in accordance with the rules laid out in the Supervisor's Manual, including the guidelines for room setup, book distribution, seating charts, and proctor selection and training.

## **To ensure that candidates are assessed consistently across jurisdictions, UBE jurisdictions will**

- administer a common set of six MEE questions.
- administer the entire examination to each UBE candidate. Banked or transferred scores may not be used in calculating UBE total scores.
- grade the MEE and MPT using generally applicable rules of law rather than jurisdiction-specific law.
- train and calibrate their MEE and MPT graders to follow uniform standards applied by all UBE jurisdictions.

- have NCBE perform the scaling of the MEE and MPT scores to the MBE to ensure that score calculations are performed consistently across jurisdictions.
- make admission decisions based on NCBE's scaled score calculations; that is, they will not conduct regrading after examination results have been announced.
- report on their test administrations and permit occasional audit by NCBE to verify that best practices are being followed.

## To facilitate score portability and transfers, UBE jurisdictions will

- generate a UBE total score expressed on a 400-point scale.
- require candidates to provide sufficient information on the MBE answer sheets to identify their scores for transfer by NCBE, including the candidate's name, date of birth, and Social Security number or NCBE number.
- submit all UBE scores to a central registry maintained by NCBE to ensure that a full score history is reported by NCBE to receiving jurisdictions when candidates request UBE score transfers.
- provide, or have NCBE provide, candidates with their written scaled scores, MBE scaled scores, and UBE total scores so that candidates can determine if their scores are high enough to transfer to other jurisdictions.

## Role of the Jurisdictions

Representatives of numerous jurisdictions have been actively involved in shaping the UBE. UBE jurisdictions continue to participate in the discussion of issues of mutual interest and the implementation of best practices.

NCBE is prepared to assist jurisdictions that are interested in developing courses or tests on unique aspects of jurisdiction-specific law.

## NCBE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE UNIFORM BAR EXAMINATION

Gregory G. Murphy,  
Chair  
Former Chair, Montana  
Board of Bar Examiners  
Billings, MT

Hon. Rebecca White Berch  
Chief Justice, Arizona  
Supreme Court  
Phoenix, AZ

Lane V. Erickson  
Chair, Idaho Bar Exam  
Drafting Committee  
Pocatello, ID

Hon. Michael G. Heavican  
Chief Justice, Nebraska  
Supreme Court  
Lincoln, NE

Daniel F. Johnson  
Member, Alabama Board  
of Bar Examiners  
Dothan, AL

Mary Kay Kane  
Professor and Dean  
Emeritus, University of  
California Hastings  
College of the Law  
San Francisco, CA

Theodore L. Kuzniar  
President, Illinois Board  
of Admissions to the Bar  
St. Charles, IL

Hon. Cynthia L. Martin  
Member, Missouri Board of  
Law Examiners  
Kansas City, MO

Jean K. McElroy  
Regulatory Services Director,  
Washington State Bar  
Association  
Seattle, WA

Veryl V. Miles  
Dean, The Catholic  
University of America  
Columbus School of Law  
Washington, DC

Erica Moeser  
President, National  
Conference of Bar  
Examiners  
Madison, WI

Alan Ogden  
Executive Director, Colorado  
Board of Law Examiners  
Denver, CO

Rebecca S. Thiem  
Chair, Board of Trustees,  
National Conference of  
Bar Examiners  
Bismarck, ND

Hon. Gerald W. VandeWalle  
Chief Justice, North Dakota  
Supreme Court  
Bismarck, ND



**National Conference of Bar Examiners**

302 South Bedford Street, Madison, WI 53703-3622

Phone: 608-280-8550 | Fax: 608-280-8552 | TDD: 608-661-1275 | [www.ncbex.org](http://www.ncbex.org)

*Inquiries regarding the UBE may be directed to Laurie Elwell, NCBE Special Projects Coordinator, at [lelwell@ncbex.org](mailto:lelwell@ncbex.org) or 608-316-3084.*