STATE OF MONTANA
BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS

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TO: Applicants for the February 2027 Montana Bar Examination

FROM: Kathie Lynch, Bar Admissions Administrator

RE: Admission Deadlines, Schedule and Information

IMPORTANT: ***Read this entire memo and the attachments completely, then calendar the deadlines!***
This memo is intended to answer general bar exam questions such as schedules, fees, and deadline information, but all applicants should become familiar with the Montana Rules of Admission, Rules of the Board of Bar Examiners and of the Character & Fitness Commission.

FEBRUARY 2027 ADMISSIONS & BAR EXAMINATION DEADLINES

Jan. 20-February 19 **Laptop Users:** ExamSoft will send you a link if you want to use your laptop for the essay portions of the examination. You will pay $125 to ExamSoft *(not the State Bar)* to register and download exam specific software to your computer. This is voluntary and you may choose to handwrite your essays.

January 30th **The Bar Exam will be held at the Great Northern Hotel in Helena on February 23rd and 24th then the Montana Law Seminar will be distributed to examines on February 25th, 2027.** Please contact the Great Northern to make your reservation and please advise that you are making a room reservation to attend the bar exam.

January 30th **Transcripts:** Deadline for receipt of transcripts (It is your responsibility to have transcripts sent, so be sure to request them early from your law school.)

February 1st **Deadline to pay fees for the Uniform Bar Exam and the Montana Law Seminar** - To complete registration payments for the UBE and MLS visit montanabar.org/Store
NOTE: Applicants for re-examination must pay the UBE fee each time the exam is taken, but do not need to pay for or attend the Montana Law Seminar a second time.

SCHEDULE: *The UBE will be held in the Great Northern Hotel in Helena, MT.*

MONDAY February 22nd Laptops Only	TUESDAY February 23rd MEE & MPT	WEDNESDAY February 24th MBE	THURSDAY February 25th MT Law Seminar
4:00 pm **Laptop Users Only -** Brief meeting to review exam software and internet access	8:00 a.m. Registration 8:30 a.m. Instructions **9:00 a.m. MEE Begins** 12:00 p.m. Lunch Break 1:00p.m. Registration 1:15 p.m. Instructions **1:30 p.m. MPT Begins** 4:30 p.m. Adjourn	8:00 a.m. Registration 8:30 a.m. Instructions **9:00 a.m. MBE – Session 1** 12:00 p.m. Lunch Break 1:00 p.m. Registration 1:15 p.m. Instructions **1:30 p.m. MBE – Session 2** 4:30 p.m. Adjourn	**Online Only** The link to the Montana Law Seminar will be sent to you and you will have until Friday, March 5th to complete viewing.

EXAM ADMISSION INFORMATION & REQUIREMENTS

CERTIFICATION FOR ADMISSION

The Montana Rules of Admission require that you are certified by Montana's Character & Fitness Commission before you can sit for the bar exam or be admitted to the Montana Bar. The NCBE performs a background investigation on behalf of the Commission but does not determine certification for admission to the Montana Bar. The Commission will not certify you for admission until receipt of the NCBE investigative summary, which takes at least 100 days from the submission of your application. Therefore, it is critical you respond to requests for information from both the Bar Admissions Administrator and the NCBE as quickly as possible as failure to do so will delay your certification. Incomplete applications will not be considered, and complete applications do not assume certification.

"Certification" as used in the Rules of the Character & Fitness Commission refers to permission to sit for the Montana bar examination and be admitted to the practice of law in Montana. Your certification to sit for the exam will be determined by the Commission on Character and Fitness after a thorough review of your application and findings of the Commission's investigation. You have an ongoing responsibility to **keep your application current.** This includes, but is not limited to, any changes to the application previously submitted, such as changes in employment, address, and most notably, any matter relating to character & fitness. Certification letters are typically mailed by hard copy thirty days prior to the examination. **No applicant may sit for the exam or be admitted to the State Bar of Montana until they have received certification from the Character & Fitness Commission. Failure to provide a complete application to the Montana Bar and to the NCBE in a timely manner may delay or prevent certification.**

MPRE

It is the applicant's sole responsibility to have their MPRE score(s) certified to the Bar Admissions Administrator.

MPRE Score: To qualify for admission, an applicant must obtain an MPRE scaled score of 80 or higher from any testing site within three years prior to applying to take the Montana Bar Examination or no later than nine months after notification of successful completion of the Montana Bar Examination. Montana does not administer the MPRE, but information about MPRE test dates, deadlines, preparation and study materials are available on the NCBE website.

LAW SCHOOL TRANSCRIPTS

Applicants must have a certified final law school transcript showing you have received a Juris Doctorate degree from an ABA-accredited law school sent directly to the Bar Admissions Administrator's office no less than thirty days prior to the bar exam. A**pplicants will not be allowed to sit for the exam and are not eligible for admission to the Montana Bar unless proof of a qualifying JD has been received.**

UBE & MLS FEES

Applicants must have their examination and Montana Law Seminar fees paid in full no later than the deadline stated above. These fees are for administration of the UBE and MLS and are separate from and in addition to the application fee you paid with your original application. Fees can be paid online by ACH Check or card. Please note, there is an additional 3% processing surcharge.

- Uniform Bar Exam $310
- Montana Law Seminar (MLS) $155

DEFERRALS & NO SHOWS

If you are unable to sit for the examination or attend the MLS, you are required to submit a written request to defer **prior to the exam**. An applicant's failure to appear without first requesting a deferral in writing will result in the application being dismissed. After three deferrals, an applicant must submit a new application and pay the application filing fee. To defer to the next exam, send the completed Addendum/ Deferral form to the Bar Admissions Administrator with a check or pay the $20 fee online.

LAPTOP or HANDWRITE?

All essay answers (the MEE and MPT) may be handwritten in blue books that we provide or by using a laptop pre-registered with ExamSoft's SofTest™ software prior to the exam. There is a separate fee payable to ExamSoft for using your laptop, but it is completely voluntary and any examinee may choose to handwrite their exam rather than use a laptop. A laptop examinee may choose to handwrite once the exam begins, but a hand-writer cannot decide to use a laptop after laptop registration has closed. ALL examinees who utilize the laptop option should be prepared to hand write in case of power outages or laptop problems.

EXAMINATION INFORMATION & REQUIREMENTS

UNIFORM BAR EXAMINATION

A UBE score of 266 or higher is a requirement for admission to the State Bar of Montana. The Uniform Bar Examination (UBE) consists of three separate exam components administered together in a single exam administration: six MEE questions, two MPT items, and the MBE. All three exams are developed by the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) and are uniformly administered, graded, and scored by user jurisdictions resulting in a portable score. The NCBE provides excellent information, study aids, and preparation information regarding each of these exams.

EXAM CONTENT

The Multistate Essay Examination (MEE) is developed as a six-question essay test to be administered in one three-hour test session. The purpose of the MEE is to test the examinee's ability to (1) identify legal issues raised by a hypothetical factual situation; (2) separate material which is relevant from that which is not; (3) present a reasoned analysis of the relevant issues in a clear, concise, and well-organized composition; and (4) demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental legal principles relevant to the probable solution of the issues raised by the factual situation. The Montana Board of Bar Examiners grade the MEE and MPT and suggest examinees review their Guideline for Acceptable Essay Answers.

> **NOTE - Effective with the February 2015 bar exam,** the MEE Federal Civil Procedure subject matter outline will be modified to conform to the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) Civil Procedure subject matter outline so that there will be one unified set of Civil Procedure specifications for both exams. Civil Procedure will appear on the MBE also effective with the February 2015 bar exam. The MEE subject matter outline for Federal Civil Procedure is shown in more detail on NCBE's website. Additionally, Negotiable Instruments (Uniform Commercial Code Article 3 and the excerpts of Article 4, Bank Collections) will no longer be tested on the MEE.

The Multistate Performance Test (MPT) is a three-hour examination, with two 90-minute skills questions covering legal analysis, fact analysis, problem solving, resolution of ethical dilemmas, organization and management of a lawyering task, and communication. The MPT is designed to test an examinee's ability to use fundamental lawyering skills in a realistic situation. Each test evaluates an examinee's ability to complete a task that a beginning lawyer should be able to accomplish. More information and study aids can be found on NCBE's website.

The Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) is a 200-question multiple-choice test that is administered in two three-hour test sessions. The purpose of the MBE is to assess the extent to which an examinee can apply fundamental legal principles and legal reasoning to analyze given fact patterns. The exam is divided into morning and afternoon testing sessions of three hours each, with 100 questions in each session. The questions on the MBE are distributed between the following topics: Civil Procedure, Constitutional Law, Contracts, Criminal Law and Procedure, Evidence, Real Property, and Torts. Please refer to the MBE Subject Matter Outline for the MBE's scope of coverage and information about the MBE on the NCBE's website.

EXAMINATION DAY REGULATIONS

The exam schedule will be strictly adhered to, and all applicants must arrive on time for registration. *An individual schedule will be provided to those granted testing accommodation due to a qualifying disability.

Once you register, you will be required to stay in the testing room until testing begins. For exam security, you will not be allowed to leave to go to the restroom or for any other reason until instructions are finished, and the exam clock has begun counting down. We will have earplugs, highlighters, pens, and scratch paper available (you are not allowed to use your own paper, sticky notes, etc). You will not be allowed to have digital watches or clocks on the tables during testing - the Board will provide large digital timers that will mark the official time for each exam.

The following items may be brought into the exam room in a one-quart clear plastic food storage bag:

- The signed Montana Bar Examination Code of Conduct form
- Government Issued Photo ID *(the same ID copied for your application)*
- Earplugs *(not earphones or headphones)*
- Wallet *(must be kept on the table in a clear plastic bag)*
- Keys
- Facial tissue
- Medication and medical items
- Non-digital watch or timepiece
- One clear plastic bottle of water/juice/soda per exam session *(no food items unless previously cleared)*

The following items are strictly prohibited and will not be permitted in the exam room or the testing area, which includes the restrooms and hallway. *(Any item brought to the testing area will be held at registration until the conclusion of the exam.)*

- Handbags, purses, backpacks, duffle bags, briefcases, lunch bags, tote bags, etc.
- Mechanical pencils
- Hats, hoods or any other headgear
- Notes, scratch paper, books, magazines, newspapers, or any other reading material
- Bar review or other study material in any format or media
- Electronic devices such as cell phones, calculators, pagers, cameras, radios, recording devices, hand-held computers, and any other type of electronic device or item with an on/off switch
- Weapons of any kind, regardless of whether you have a permit to carry
- Any other item not specifically allowed

***NOTE**:* Possession of a prohibited device or item at the examination may be treated as a cheating incident and you may be immediately DISQUALIFIED AND EJECTED from the examination.

What to Wear: For the UBE, you are encouraged to dress comfortably in layers as the temperature in the exam room can fluctuate, however no hats or hooded sweatshirts are allowed.

Seating, Breaks, etc.: You will be assigned seating. When you leave the room to take a break, you must raise your hand and a proctor will collect your test materials. Upon your return, test materials will be returned to you. When you leave the room during the exam, you may not leave the immediate lobby area or use cell phones, pay

phones, or any electronic devices. You may leave your personal items with the registration desk, but you may not access them until you have completed the examination.

There is a NO SMOKING policy during the Montana bar exam during testing periods. Beverages may be brought into the testing room but must be always capped and kept on the floor. Food is not allowed in the exam room.

Pens for the MEE & MPT and Pencils for the MBE: Everyone should be prepared to write for the exams, even if you're planning on using your laptop. Pencils and erasers will be provided by the Bar Administrators for the MBE on Wednesday.

If you have a medical condition of which the staff should be aware, please complete the Notice of Medical Alert Form and return it prior to the examination. At any time during the bar exam, notify the Bar Admissions Administrator if a medical emergency arises which affects your ability to complete the examination.

MONTANA LAW SEMINAR – ONLINE ONLY

All applicants, regardless of admission method, must view the Montana Law Seminar (MLS). The MLS is a Supreme Court required course that will focus on the structure of the legal system in Montana, the unique aspects of Montana law, and the accepted mores and culture of practicing law in Montana. The Seminar is directed specifically to those seeking admission to the Bar and is not a CLE program. An applicant may not be admitted to the Montana Bar until viewing the Seminar has been confirmed.

POST-EXAMINATION INFORMATION

GRADING & SCORING

The MEE and MPT answers will be graded by the Board of Bar Examiners using their grading scale of zero to six, with six being the highest score and zero being the lowest possible score. The scores from each segment of the exam will be converted to the 400-point UBE scale and combined with the MBE scaled scores. The MEE and MPT are scaled to the MBE, which is weighted 50%, the MEE 30%, and the MPT 20%. The lowest passing combined score for Montana is 266.

RESULTS

Test Results will be sent by email and US Mail within 8 weeks to the last known address we have on file for you. Those who pass the exam will receive instructions for swearing-in and admission. If you do not pass the exam, you may request copies of your graded MEE and MPT exams and your MBE score along with instructions for retaking the next scheduled exam. Results may not be released early and, by rule, will not be made public until five (5) days after the final grades are approved by the Board of Bar Examiners and results are emailed/mailed to examinees.

Official UBE Score Transcripts: Examinees who would like to have their certified UBE scores transferred to other jurisdictions must submit a request to the NCBE for an official score transcript. All jurisdictions that administer the UBE accept transferred UBE scores. More information about UBE scores and how to request having your score transferred can be found on the NCBE's UBE page.

ADMISSION & SWEARING-IN

The Supreme Court controls the swearing in of new attorneys and sets the date for swearing in. The ceremony is held in Helena and, depending on the Court's schedule, is usually held in early May for the February exam and early October for the July exam. You will be notified of the exact date with your results letter or as soon as the date is set. Friends and family are welcome to attend. You do not have to attend the ceremony and can petition the Court to grant offsite swearing in.