The State Bar *of California*

Update on February 2025 Bar Examination

April 2, 2025

Board of Trustees Meeting

Activity Since Last Meeting

CBE reviewed Feb 2025 Bar Exam Preliminary Psychometric Analysis

Possibility of expedited grading explored (grading underway)

Bar exam retake completed

Data analysis to inform possible psychometric grading adjustments

CBE advanced proposal to Board of Trustees (agendized for Board action)

MCQ Performance Overview

Reliability Findings

Target Reliability: 0.80+
Actual (175 scored items): 0.90
Initial (Nov MCQs): 0.82

Pre-Exam Review Process

Independent lawyer panels reviewed MCQs for:
- Content accuracy
- Cognitive complexity
- Potential bias
- Minimum competency alignment

Style edits applied to all questions

Post-Exam Analysis

Conducted with psychometricians
Included deeper review of item performance
Professional copyediting in response to concerns about spelling errors and typos

Key Findings

Question Difficulty:
- 33 "Too easy"
- 7 "Too difficult"
→ No impact on reliability

Response Option Analysis:
- Some items had < functioning distractors
- Require review, revision, or removal

Scoring Approach:
- 175 out of 200 MCQs scored
- 25 per subject area, selected by statistical performance
- Strong overall reliability: 0.90

Bar Exam Retake

★ Retake completed for all participants as of March 21

★ 87 individuals given the opportunity to retest:

★ 8 withdrew
1 was a no-show
No major incidents were reported

Data Analysis

To inform possible psychometric adjustments

To identify and classify different exam experiences

- Inputs:
  - Post-exam survey
 - Meazure-provided data
  - State Bar data

- Results Pending:
  - To be shared publicly as soon as practicable

Work is underway and is being done
with conjunction with psychometrician
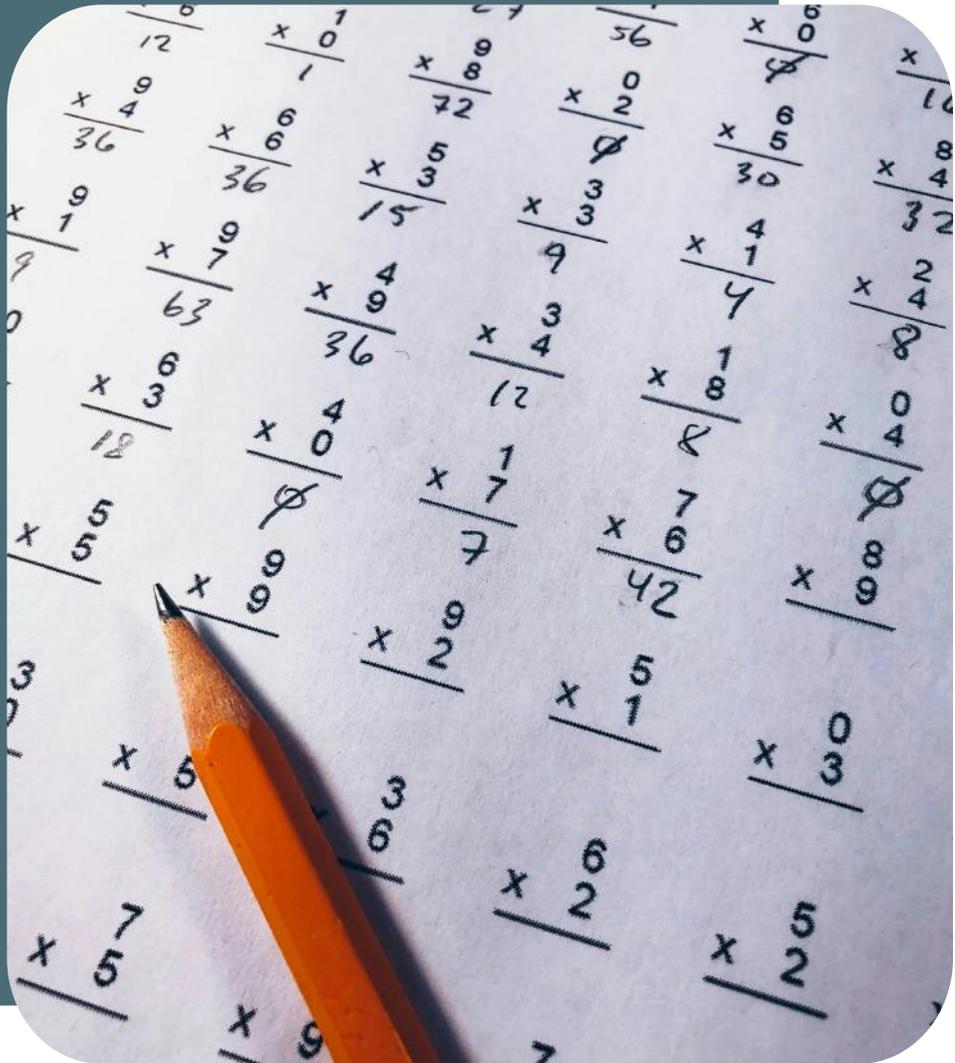
Grading Underway

- MCQs have been scored

On February 27, question assignments were distributed to the grading panels. By March 7, the narrative answer and outlines were submitted to the Exam Development and Grading Team (EDGT) to support the calibration process.

Calibration session held on March 15. Graders completed five familiarization answers in advance of that session. During the meeting, the group collectively read and discussed 15 answers to establish grading consistency. Following this session, graders independently evaluated 25 tentative answers.

On March 22, tentative grading statistics were reviewed confidentially, and a second calibration session took place, where graders read and discussed 10 additional answers as a group. Later that day, Phase I (Read 1) grading officially commenced, with all graders receiving answer files through the Grader Portal.

Viability of Expedited Grading
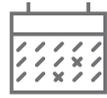
Current Grading Timeline

Grading completion: May 2
9 weeks from Feb CBX
Reduced from 11 weeks in 2020

Capacity & Constraints

Grader limit: Up to 14 per question (psychometrician recommendation)

More Graders?
✅ Could speed up grading
❌ Training delays
❌ Risk of inconsistent scoring

Options Under Consideration

1. Eliminate Second Read
   • Could shorten grading by at least 1 week
   • Some applicants move from fail to pass in this phase

2. Eliminate Calibration Meetings
   • Would reduce time
   • Would reduce quality control

3. Implement AI in Grading
   • Early-stage exploration
   • AI would support, not replace human graders
   • Further study and input required