



The State Bar *of California*

2025 Bar Exams: A Look Back at February and a Look Forward to July

Donna S. Hershkowitz, Chief of Admissions / Legislative Director
Audrey Ching, Admissions Director

Committee of Bar Examiners, March 14, 2025

A Quick Look at the Numbers

- 4,328 Scheduled to take the Exam
 - 2,784 remote
 - 1,544 in person
 - 352 scheduled for 1-day Attorneys Exam
 - 470 with testing accommodations
 - 132 handwriters scheduled
 - 4193 attended / 133 no shows*
- 1,346 withdrawals
 - (1,066 since offer of full refund)



Inputs from Measure Learning





Meazure

- Preliminary data derived from applicants who took the test on the Meazure platform
- Test taker session start and end time for each session
- Submissions of written components with content
- MCQ and written answers
- Pending: Review of more detailed data reports



Inputs from Test Takers





Test Taker Outreach

- Escalation to Measure Learning technicians during exam
- Calls to State Bar during and after exam
- Emails from test takers during and after exam
- Communication with State Bar staff on site at select test centers



Types of Issues Reported: Technology

- Inability to launch exam at all
- Frequent disconnections
- Hours of tech support to get back to testing
- Running of time while addressing issues
- Unexpected submission of answers before completion / inability to submit answers
- Significant delays in starting the exam at test centers
- System not performing as expected
 - Cut and paste not functioning
 - Screen freezing (time continuing to run)
 - Lags in typed answers appearing on screen
 - Problems with highlighting
 - PT file and library not available



Types of Issues Reported: Human

- Proctors and technical support unable to resolve problems
- Incorrect information from proctors / support
- Disruption by proctors to re-conduct security scan or adjust seating/camera position
- Frequent switching of proctors
- Unprofessional / rude behavior from proctors / support



What Does This Tell Us





What We Know About Performance

- Preliminary data from Measure paints a different picture than reports from test takers in terms of ability to complete MCQs and submit written content
- Disconnect between data and reported experience may lay in quality of responses / unhindered ability to demonstrate knowledge and minimum competence





What We Know About Performance: Essay / PT

- ~4100 applicants using the Measure Learning Platform
 - 98% had some content on all 6 written components
 - 1.3% had content on 4 or 5 written components
 - Fewer than 1% had no content on 3 or more written components





What We Know About Performance: MCQs

- 12 using Measure Learning platform failed to complete any MCQs due to tech issues
- 20 failed to complete more than 1 MCQ section
- Of the remaining ~ 4000
 - 98% submitted answers to at least 195 questions



Efforts to Identify Impacts on Quality



Review of random sample of test takers to assess response quality and anomalies



Survey of test takers issued March 4

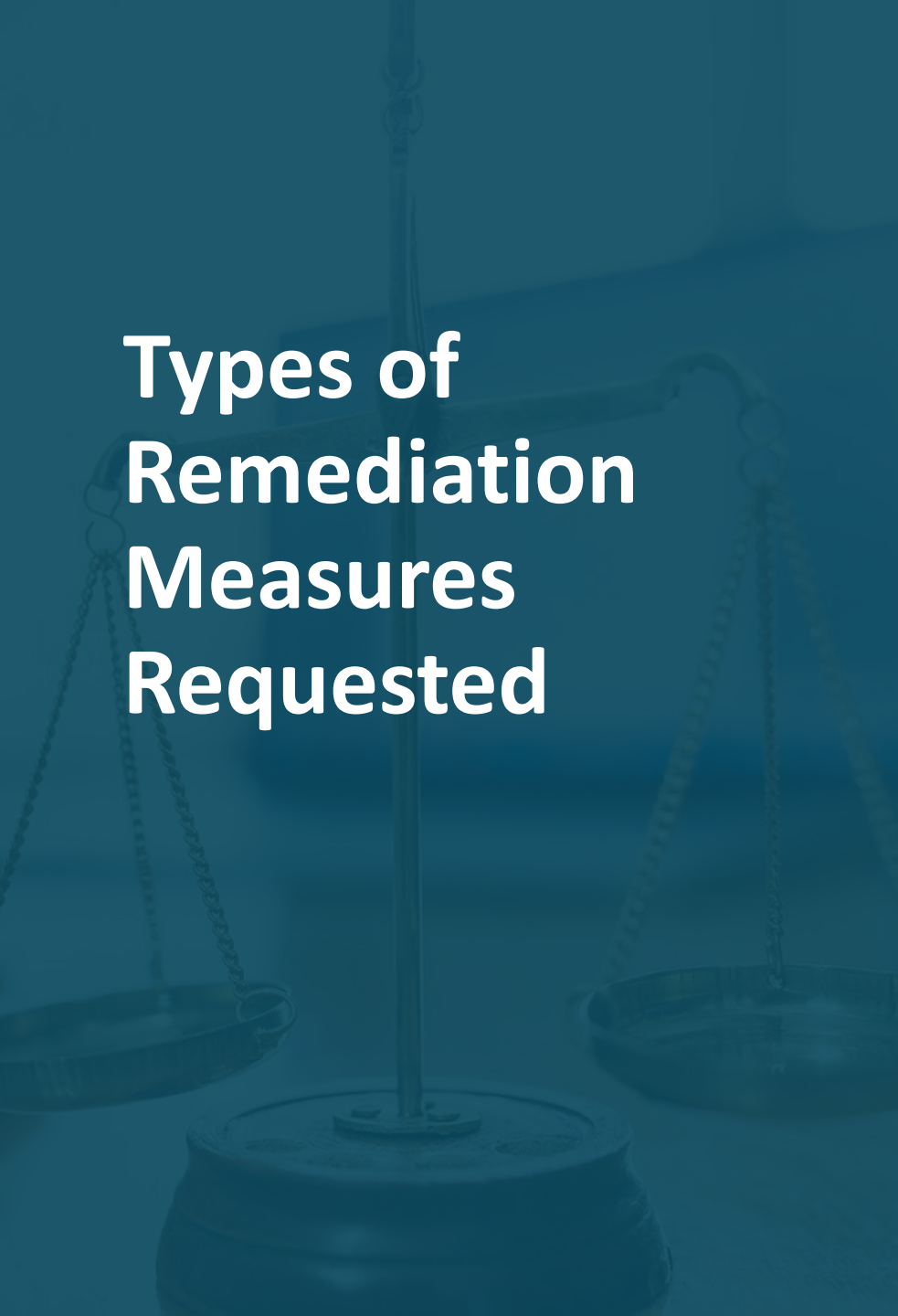


In depth review of more detailed data



Overlay with reports of tech issues individually and by site





Types of Remediation Measures Requested

- Individualized solutions
- Global solutions
- Solutions specific to certain exam components



Types of Remediation Measures Requested



**Individual
point
adjustments**



**Consideration
of
circumstances
by graders**



**Adding of
points to all
test takers'
scores**



**Retakes for All
or Some**



**Retake of
Performance
Test**



Types of Remediation Measures Requested



- Reducing the pass line / cut score
- Ensuring a set percentage of test takers pass



Reciprocal admission for attorneys licensed in other jurisdictions



Refunds to all test takers / extension of free retake through Feb 2026



Provisional Licensure



Admission of all test takers / Diploma Privilege



Discussion of Suggested Remediation Options



Full or Partial Retests Offered to 87 Test Takers



Test takers unable to launch the exam entirely



Test takers who submitted fewer than 4 of 6 written components with content in the answer / notes



Test takers who submitted fewer than 3 out of 4 MCQ sections





Supreme Court Action Required

- Supreme Court action required for many / most, including:
 - Change to the Pass Line / Cut Score
 - Ensuring a set percentage of test takers pass
 - Passing all test takers
 - Provisional Licensure
 - Diploma Privilege





Psychometric Solutions

- Retest of those who do not have sufficient content for possible imputing of scores
- Psychometric analysis v. consideration of circumstances by graders to address “quality” issues
- Psychometric analysis / solutions typically follow the scoring of the exams and determination of whether / how some or all applicants impacted





Challenges with Some Global Solutions

- Lack of knowledge of whether and extent to which all applicants impacted
- High percentage of repeat takers
- Low passage rate on February bar exams
 - Are solutions like provisional licensure appropriate?



Can Psychometric Solutions Address Disruptions Like Those Experienced on this Exam?



February 2025 Bar Exam

Grading the Bar Exam



The State Bar of California



Request from the Board of Trustees

CBE to consider ways to expedite the timeline for grading the February 2025 Bar Exam to provide more timely resolution for test takers in light of their experiences



Process

Current Timeline: Grading is scheduled to be completed in nine weeks, with results released on May 2, 2025.

Process Steps:

1. Graders develop a detailed analysis and outline of assigned questions.
2. Three calibration meetings are held (spaced 1-2 weeks apart).
3. Independent grading occurs concurrently.
4. Second read is conducted for applicants within 40 points of 1390.

Second Read: In the last two February exams, 11.6% of applicants went to second read, and 12.7% of those moved from fail to pass.



Past Efforts to Reduce Timeline

Grading Timeline has Been Reduced

Reduced Timeline: Since 2020, the February grading period has been shortened from 11 weeks to 9 weeks.

Expanded Grading Team: Increased to 14 graders per question, the maximum recommended by the State Bar's psychometrician to maintain consistency.

Process Changes: Third phase (resolution) was eliminated.



Challenges with Expediting for CBE's Consideration

Increasing the Number of Graders per Question

- The State Bar currently uses the psychometrician's identified recommendation of up to 14 graders.
- Adding graders at this stage – with grading having begun - could introduce delays due to additional training requirements.

Eliminating the Second Read

- Could reduce the timeline by at least one week.
- Would negatively impact applicants, as some move from fail to pass in this phase.

Eliminating Calibration Meetings

- Would remove an essential quality control measure.
- Risks inconsistencies in scoring, affecting fairness and reliability.

Implementing Artificial Intelligence in Grading

- Early-stage exploration of AI for assisting graders and improving efficiency.
- AI tools would not replace human graders but could support quicker grading.
- Research can begin using archival questions and responses to evaluate AI's effectiveness; but not ready to deploy at this time.

