



The State Bar of California

OPEN SESSION
AGENDA ITEM 4.3
AUGUST 2024
COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS

DATE: August 16, 2024

TO: Members, Committee of Bar Examiners

FROM: Natalie Leonard, Principal Program Analyst, Office of Admissions

SUBJECT: Action on 2024 Minimum, Cumulative Five-Year Bar Exam Pass Rate
Compliance Reporting for Accredited Law Schools

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

California Accredited Law Schools (CALs) must maintain a Minimum, Cumulative Five-Year Bar Pass Rate (MPR) of 40 percent or more, calculated using the formula set forth in rule 4.160(D)(6) of the [Rules for California Accredited Law Schools](#).

All 15 California accredited law schools reported a compliant MPR of 40 percent or more, as set forth in Attachment A. Staff recommends that all 15 schools' reports be accepted as evidence of full compliance.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends that the 2024 MPR compliance report set forth in Attachment A be adopted and published on the State Bar's website, and that all accredited law schools be considered to have demonstrated compliance with rule 4.160(D)(6), since all reported five-year cumulative bar exam pass rates of 40 percent or more.

DISCUSSION

TRENDS AT COMPLIANT LAW SCHOOLS

The 2024 Minimum, Cumulative Five-Year Bar Exam Passage Rate (MPR) calculation is set forth in accredited rule 4.160(D)(6). It includes the bar pass results for those graduates who completed their JDs during the five-year reporting period between August 1, 2018, and July 31, 2023, and took the bar exam at least once during that same period. These graduates' results from the February 2024 bar exam are also included for the subset of students who graduated in March 2019 or later – or within ten administrations and five years of graduation.

The MPR calculation is then further adjusted to address these graduates' participation in the Provisional Licensure Program's Pathway to Full Licensure (PLP) as set forth in California Rules of Court 9.49.1. If they successfully complete the program, they will be able to license as California attorneys without taking another bar exam.

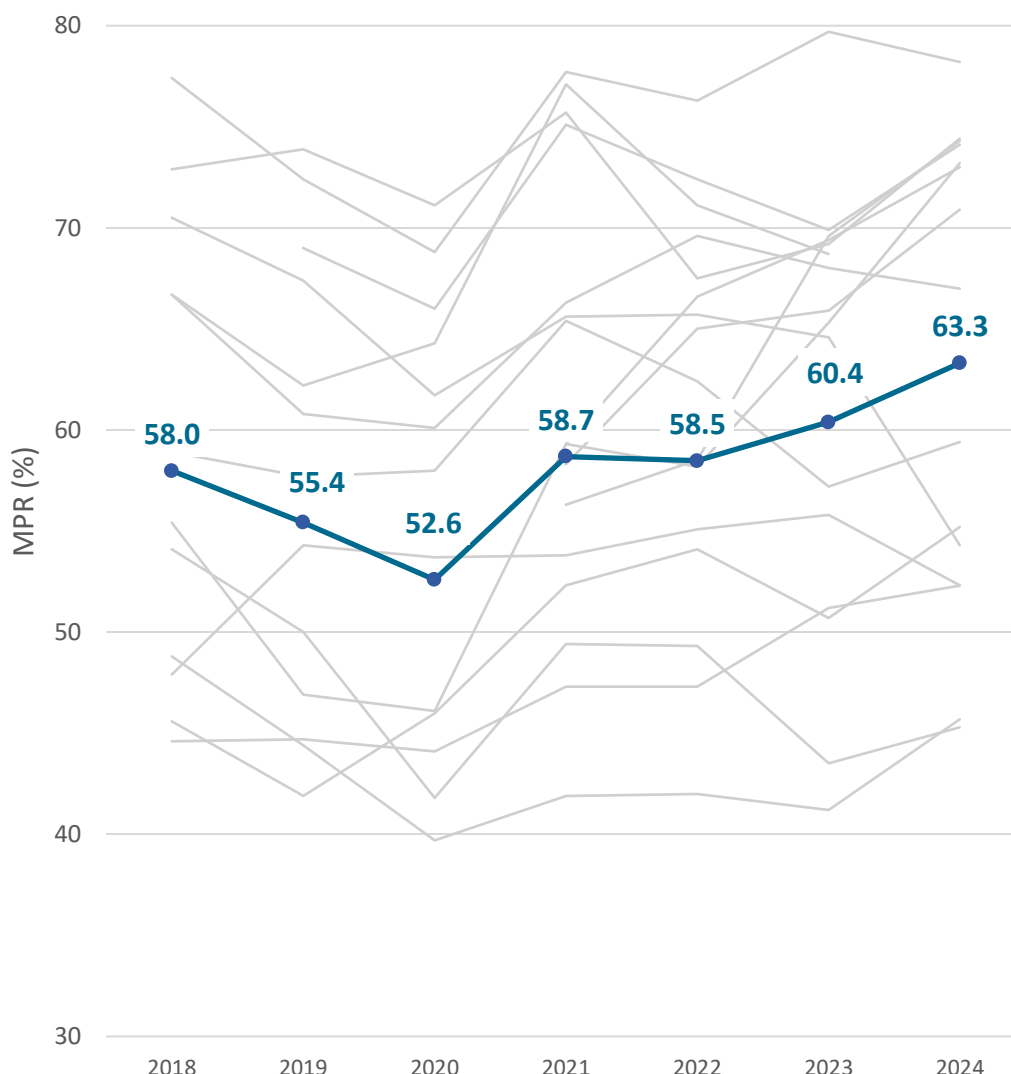
Those graduates who were still in the PLP program as of July 1, 2024 are excluded from the MPR calculation, while those who have completed the program and been assigned a bar number are placed in the numerator of the calculation along with those graduates who passed a bar exam.¹

While all California accredited schools reported compliant MPR's, in addition 11 of the 15 accredited law schools improved their MPR from 2023 to 2024. Since MPR reporting again became required in 2018, the accredited segment as a whole has continued to see significant increases in MPR value. On average accredited law schools improved their MPR from 58 percent to 63.3 percent since 2018.

2024 MPR values reported ranged from a high of 78.2 percent at San Joaquin College of Law (San Joaquin) to 45.3 percent at the University of West Los Angeles. San Joaquin reported the highest MPR in 2023 as well. The average MPR for all California accredited law schools is 63.3 percent, approximately five percent higher than 2023. The median MPR is 67.0 percent, approximately two percent higher than 2023, respectively (when the average was 60.3 percent and the median 65.3 percent).

¹ The MPR calculation is adjusted for those who pursue the alternative pathway because those graduates do not need to take the bar exam again in order to become licensed, when they otherwise would have done so; therefore, the MPR calculation is adjusted accordingly so the law schools are not penalized when these graduates do not take a bar exam again. Graduates who participate in the original PLP program must still take and pass the bar exam to become licensees, so no MPR calculation adjustment is needed for these participants.

Figure 1: Average California Accredited Law School MPR by Year



Note: The grey lines represent the reported MPR (Minimum Passing Rate) of individual law schools, providing context on the variance in MPR figures. These lines are not attributed to specific schools. For detailed figures for each school, please refer to Attachment A

Of the 15 accredited schools, four schools reported MPR values lower than what they reported in 2023. This is a continued trend for two of those law schools: Lincoln Law School of Sacramento and Thomas Jefferson School of Law (respective decreases of 1 and 10.3 percentage points). Thomas Jefferson School of Law reported the largest decline of any law school, decreasing from 64.6 percent in 2023 to 54.3 percent in 2024. While Thomas Jefferson School of Law began operating as a California accredited law school in 2020, it was also teaching out current students in its ABA approved program. The final graduates in the ABA teach-out program completed their studies in 2023. Since that time, its graduates have been graduates of the California Accredited program.

Of the 11 accredited law schools that improved their MPR from 2023 to 2024, six have been doing so for multiple years. (California Northern School of Law, Purdue Global Law School, Empire College School of Law, Northwestern California University School of Law, Saint Francis School of Law, and Trinity Law School). Notably, Northwestern California University School of Law, Saint Francis School of Law, and Purdue Global Law School have improved their MPRs every year since first becoming accredited in 2020.

Staff generally sends courtesy notifications to those schools whose MPR is 45 percent or below, but no schools fell into that category, so no notification letters are needed.

PREVIOUS ACTION

[Action on 2023 MPR Compliance Reporting for Accredited Law Schools](#) - August 18, 2023

FISCAL/PERSONNEL IMPACT

None

AMENDMENTS TO RULES

None

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

None – core business operations

RESOLUTIONS

If the committee agrees with the staff recommendation, the following resolution should be made:

RESOLVED, that the Committee of Bar Examiners receive and file the 2024 MPR Compliance Report as set forth in Attachment A, and it is

FURTHER RESOLVED that, for 2024, all fourteen California accredited law schools be deemed in compliance with the Minimum, Cumulative Five-Year Bar Exam Pass Rate requirement of 40 percent or more, as calculated using Accredited Rule 4.160(D)(6).

ATTACHMENT(S) LIST

- A. 2024 MPR for California Accredited Law Schools



The State Bar
of California

2024 Minimum Cumulative Five-Year Bar Examination Pass Rates for California Accredited Law Schools (MPR)

Five-Year Reporting Period for Graduates Completing JD: August 1, 2018–July 31, 2023

California Accredited Law Schools (CALS) must “maintain a minimum, [five-year] cumulative bar examination pass rate” of 40 percent or more, as calculated under Rule 4.160(D)(6) of the Accredited Law School Rules. CALS report this minimum pass rate (MPR) on July 1 and the State Bar posts these figures in August after they are verified and presented to the Committee of Bar Examiners. Unaccredited law schools are not required to maintain a minimum bar pass rate.

Law schools approved by the American Bar Association must maintain a 75 percent two-year cumulative pass rate under [standard 316](#).

California Accredited Law School	2018 MPR (%)	2019 MPR (%)	2020 MPR (%)	2021 MPR (%)	2022 MPR (%)	2023 MPR (%)	2024 MPR (%)
Cal Northern School of Law	72.9	73.9	71.1	75.7	67.5	69.2	74.4
Purdue Global Law School	NA	NA	NA	56.3	58.5	69.6	74.3
Empire College School of Law*	55.4	46.9	46.1	59.3	58.2	65.3	73.2
Glendale University College of Law*	66.7	62.2	64.3	77.1	71.1	68.7	NA
Humphreys College Laurence Drivon School of Law	45.6	41.9	46.0	52.3	54.1	50.7	55.2
Lincoln Law School of Sacramento	66.7	60.8	60.1	66.3	69.6	68.0	67.0
Monterey College of Law	47.9	54.3	53.7	53.8	55.1	55.8	52.3
Northwestern California University School of Law	NA	NA	NA	58.3	65.0	65.9	70.9
JFK School of Law at National University	48.8	44.4	39.7	41.9	42.0	41.2	45.7

California Accredited Law School	2018 MPR (%)	2019 MPR (%)	2020 MPR (%)	2021 MPR (%)	2022 MPR (%)	2023 MPR (%)	2024 MPR (%)
San Joaquin College of Law	77.4	72.4	68.8	77.7	76.3	79.7	78.2
The Colleges of Law	58.9	57.7	58.0	65.4	62.4	57.2	59.4
St. Francis School of Law	NA	NA	NA	59.3	66.6	69.4	73.0
Thomas Jefferson School of Law	70.5	67.4	61.7	65.6	65.7	64.6	54.3
Trinity Law School	44.6	44.7	44.1	47.3	47.3	51.2	52.3
University of La Verne College of Law	...	69.0	66.0	75.1	72.4	69.9	74.1
University of West Los Angeles	54.1	50.0	41.8	49.4	49.3	43.5	45.3

*Voluntarily closing and no longer admitting students.