



The State Bar of *California*

Discussion of Bar Exam Multiple-Choice Question Development Process

Committee of Bar Examiners Meeting April 18, 2025

Presented By:
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Question Development & Content Validation Overview

Content Validation Panel

- Panelists individually review MCQs for:
 - Content Accuracy
 - Cognitive Complexity
 - Potential Bias
 - Minimum Competency Alignment
- Style edits applied to all questions
- Group discussion to achieve consensus

Review + Edit

- Report produced by psychometric facilitator with panel feedback
- Final recs cited as Ok, Revised, Replace
- Feedback exchange with subject matter expert

Item Bank/ Question Selection

- Items reviewed for grammar, style, and revision accuracy during finalization
- Percentage allocation breakdowns met during question selection

Post-Exam Analysis

- Conducted with psychometricians
- Deep review of item performance

Going Forward:

Professional copyediting to address spelling errors and typos

Adding additional layer of review for content accuracy



MCQ Performance Overview



Reliability Findings

- Target Reliability: 0.80+
- Actual (171 scored items): 0.89
- Initial (Nov MCQs): 0.82



Item Difficulty

- The proportion of applicants that answered a given question correctly



Response Option Analysis

- Examination of whether the answer choices (options) functioned properly - were the distractors reasonable

Item Discrimination

The ability of an item to differentiate among test takers on the basis of how well they know the material being tested

Calculations by Subject Area

	Target	Civil Procedure	Con Law	Contracts	Criminal Law & Procedure	Evidence	Real Property	Torts	Total
Average Difficulty	0.30 to 0.80	0.60	0.64	0.64	0.59	0.68	0.60	0.63	0.63
Average Discrimination	0.10+	0.19	0.22	0.19	0.13	0.20	0.18	0.13	0.18
Performance Flags*	< 6 per subject area	3	5	4	9	2	6	11	40

*Items were flagged for performance if they had item difficulty values outside the target range, average item discrimination below the target value, and/or fewer than three functioning response options defined as having at least 5% of applicants respond to the option (i.e., A, B, C, or D).

Questions?