



Administrative Office of the Courts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Mexico adopts new bar examination for aspiring lawyers

SANTA FE – Law school graduates will take a new bar examination starting in July 2027 to become licensed to practice law in New Mexico, the state Supreme Court and the Board of Bar Examiners announced today.

The NextGen bar exam will replace the Uniform Bar Exam (UBE), which New Mexico has used since 2016 and currently is administered in 39 states plus the District of Columbia and US Virgin Islands. The [National Conference of Bar Examiners](#) developed the NextGen exam, and New Mexico joins 12 other jurisdictions that have announced plans so far to adopt it.

“The new bar exam will place a greater emphasis on testing the skills fundamental to the actual practice of law rather than memorizing legal concepts and principles,” said Chief Justice C. Shannon Bacon. “The NextGen exam represents a step forward in a continuing effort to ensure new attorneys possess the knowledge and lawyering skills to meet the legal needs of New Mexicans.”

“New Mexico is excited to announce the adoption of the NextGen bar exam beginning in July 2027. Our Board, along with the New Mexico Supreme Court, has been working hard to fully appreciate the content and structure of the new exam and how it will help accurately assess our applicants’ competence to practice law” said New Mexico Board of Bar Examiners Chair Hon. Henry A. Alaniz (ret.). “We are pleased to provide the University of New Mexico School of Law with ample opportunity to prepare their incoming students for the new exam. We look forward to the implementation of an updated bar exam which aims to ensure that our new attorneys are prepared for the practice of law.”

New Mexico administers the bar exam twice a year – in February and July – and will continue to follow that schedule with the NextGen exam.

With the July 2027 launch date for the NextGen exam in New Mexico, law schools and students starting in the fall of 2024 will have their entire three-year program to prepare for the next exam.

The NextGen exam will be administered over nine hours in a day and a half. It will test students on legal principles including contract and constitutional law, civil procedure and criminal law, evidence, real property, torts and business associations. The exam focuses on skills used by

lawyers such as identifying and analyzing legal issues, negotiation and dispute resolution, legal research and writing as well as advising and counseling clients.

The new exam, like the UBE, will include multi-choice questions and performance tasks in which the question requires test takers to apply lawyering skills to realistic scenarios. The NextGen exam also features questions that integrate a factual scenario with other legal resources, such as an excerpt from a statute or court opinion, and related documents such as portions of a deposition or police report. The integrated question sets might focus on drafting a legal document, for example.

Those seeking to practice law in New Mexico also must take an online class covering topics specific to the state, including Indian law, community property, professionalism and ethics. It is available on-demand and takes about six hours to complete. The New Mexico Law Class is not affected by the move to the NextGen bar exam, however.

The Supreme Court oversees the admission and regulation of attorneys in New Mexico. The Board of Bar Examiners administers the bar exam and processes applications for admission to the practice of law in the state.

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Chief Justice C. Shannon Bacon



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