



# The State Bar *of California*

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**OPEN SESSION  
AGENDA ITEM  
JANUARY 2020  
COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS ITEM O-200**

**DATE:** January 31, 2020

**TO:** Members, Committee of Bar Examiners

**FROM:** Lisa Jeong Cummins, Program Manager III, Examinations

**SUBJECT:** Technical Report on the October 2019 First-Year Law Students' Examination

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## **BACKGROUND**

After results from the First-Year Law Students' Examination are released, the Committee of Bar Examiners' (Committee) psychometric consultant prepares a technical report on the examination. The report includes information about the scoring process and summarizes the statistics for that exam taker population.

## **DISCUSSION**

Attached is the report prepared by Roger Bolus, Ph.D., on the October 2019 administration of the First-Year Law Students' Examination.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the technical report be received and filed; and that the Committee approve the following motion:

**MOVE** that the technical report on the October 2019 First-Year Law Students' Examination dated January 3, 2020, which was prepared by Roger Bolus, Ph.D., be received and filed.

## **ATTACHMENT LIST**

- A. Technical Report on the October 2019 First-Year Law Students' Examination

**TECHNICAL REPORT ON THE OCTOBER 2019  
FIRST-YEAR LAW STUDENTS' EXAMINATION**

. Roger Bolus, Ph.D.

January 3, 2020

The First-Year Law Students' Examination has two parts, multiple choice and essay. The multiple-choice section consists of 100 items dealing with Contracts, Criminal Law, and Torts. Multiple-choice raw scores (i.e., number of items answered correctly) were equated to the October 2014, June 2017 and June 1998 exam using 29 items that were common to each of these exams. The equating formula was as follows:

$$\text{Multiple Choice Scale} = (3.4522 \times \text{raw multiple-choice score}) + 25.4099$$

The essay section consisted of four questions in the same subjects as the multiple-choice test. Scores were assigned to answers on a 40 to 100-point scale in 5-point intervals. The candidates' raw total essay scores were scaled to a score distribution that had the same mean and standard deviation as their multiple-choice scores using the following formula:

$$\text{Essay Scale} = (1.9514 \times \text{raw essay total score}) + -280.2147$$

A candidate's total scale score was the sum of that candidate's multiple choice and essay scale scores. Candidates with total scores of 560 or higher pass and those with scores below 540 fail. Candidates in the 540 to 559.9999 range have their essay answers and all their scores reviewed by a member of the Committee's Examination Development and Grading Team.

Of the 294 candidates who took the exam, 48 had total scale scores of 560 or greater and 229 had total scale scores that were below 540. The latter count includes 5 failing candidates who did not complete the exam. Of the 17 candidates in the reappraisal range, all 17 passed. The total number passing (65) was 22% of the total number of takers (see General Statistics report printout for details). The table below summarizes the main test statistics for the multiple-choice, essay, and total scores for the 289 applicants completing the exam. There was a 0.65 correlation between their essay and multiple-choice scores.

Score	Raw Scores		Scale Scores		Score Reliability
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Multiple-Choice	60.76	14.4	235.18	49.72	0.91
Essay	264.12	25.48	235.18	49.72	0.63
Total			470.37	90.29	0.86

The mean raw scores on the Contracts, Criminal Law, and Torts sections of the multiple choice test were 18.00, 21.44, and 21.33. The corresponding standard deviations were 5.88, 5.15, and 5.05.