



The State Bar *of California*

OPEN SESSION

AGENDA ITEM O-201

MARCH 2021

COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS

DATE: March 26, 2021

TO: Members, Committee of Bar Examiners

FROM: Lisa J. Cummins, Program Manager III, Examinations

SUBJECT: Approval of Technical Report on the November 2020 First-Year Law Students' Examination

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A technical report for the November 2020 administration of the First-Year Law Students' Examination was prepared by the Committee's psychometrician, Roger Bolus, Ph.D. Staff requests that the Committee approve the report, after which it will be received and filed.

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 technical report prepared by Roger Bolus, Ph.D., on the November 2020 administration of the First-Year Law Students' Examination.

FISCAL/PERSONNEL IMPACT

None

AMENDMENTS TO RULES OF THE STATE BAR

None

AMENDMENTS TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICY MANUAL

None

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goal: None - Core business operations

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the technical report be approved, then received and filed.

PROPOSED MOTION

Should the Committee of Bar Examiners agree with staff recommendation, the following motion would be appropriate:

MOVE that the technical report on the November 2020 First-Year Law Students' Examination dated March 9, 2021, which was prepared by Roger Bolus, Ph.D., be approved, and thereafter received and filed.

ATTACHMENT LIST

- A.** Technical Report on the November 2020 First-Year Law Students' Examination

TECHNICAL REPORT ON THE NOVEMBER 2020 FIRST YEAR LAW STUDENTS' EXAMINATION

Roger Bolus, Ph.D.

March 9, 2021

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 June 1998, 2013, 2018, and October 2015 exam using 21 items that were common to each of these exams. The equating formula was as follows:

$$\text{Multiple Choice Scale} = (3.9665 \times \text{raw multiple-choice score}) + -8.4123$$

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:

$$\text{Essay Scale} = (2.0852 \times \text{raw essay total score}) + -279.8078$$

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 305 candidates who took the exam, 50 had total scale scores of 560 or greater and 234 had total scale scores that were below 540. The latter count includes 4 failing candidates who did not complete the exam. Of the 21 candidates in the reappraisal range, 13 passed. The total number passing (63) was 21% 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 301 applicants completing the exam. There was a .68 correlation between their essay and multiple-choice scores.

Score	Raw Scores		Scale Scores		Score
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Reliability
Multiple-Choice	59.87	14.21	229.06	56.38	0.90
Essay	244.20	26.72	229.4	55.72	0.74
Total			458.47	102.59	0.89

The mean raw scores on the Contracts, Criminal Law, and Torts sections of the Multiple-choice test were 18.93, 20.49, and 20.45. The corresponding standard deviations were 5.72, 4.24, and 5.79.