



# The State Bar *of California*

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**OPEN SESSION  
AGENDA ITEM O-400  
AUGUST 2021  
COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS**

**DATE:** August 20, 2021

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

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

**SUBJECT:** Action on Minimum Cumulative Five-Year Bar Exam Pass Rate (MPR)  
Compliance Reporting for Accredited Law Schools (Rule 4.160(N))

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## **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 Accredited Law School Guideline 12.1. (Rule 4.160(N)).

Fifteen of eighteen California accredited law schools have continued to report a compliant MPR of 40 percent or more, as set forth in Attachment A, and it is recommended that their reports be accepted as evidence of full compliance.

One additional law school previously placed on probation due to failure to report an MPR of 40 percent or more in 2020 has reported a 2021 MPR of 41.9 percent and will be presented for possible termination of probation as part of a separate agenda item today.

The final two California accredited law schools have reported an MPR below 40 percent, as they did in 2020, after which they were placed on probation by the Committee of Bar Examiners (CBE). Lincoln Law School of San Jose reported an MPR of 36.5 percent; San Francisco Law School reported an MPR of 39.0 percent. These law schools' continued probation will be presented for further discussion as part of a separate agenda item today.

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## **BACKGROUND**

Each CALS must maintain a five-year cumulative MPR bar pass rate of at least 40 percent. By way of comparison, unaccredited law schools do not need to maintain a minimum pass rate, while law schools approved by the American Bar Association must maintain a pass rate of 75 percent for each individual graduating class within two years after graduation.

The 2021 MPR evaluates the bar passage performance of those who graduated from a CALS during the five year reporting period between August 1, 2015 and July 31, 2020 and took the bar exam at least once during that same period or in October 2020.

Results from the February 2021 bar exam are also included for those who graduated during the reporting period and within 10 administrations of that exam, in March 2016 or later. This ensures that each graduate included in the calculation has had at least two opportunities to take the bar exam before being included in the calculation while also ensuring that no graduate has more than ten opportunities to take the bar exam included in the calculation. (See Guideline 12.1 for full calculation).

Each year, CALS send in their compliance reports by July 1, and the numbers are verified by the State Bar before presenting them to the CBE. Ultimately, the MPR figures are published on the State Bar's website.

## **DISCUSSION**

The 2021 MPR statistics are set forth in Attachment A along with each school's prior MPR since 2018. Only those graduates who earned their JD's between August 1, 2015 and July 31, 2020 are included in the 2021 MPR.

The 2021 MPR was calculated using the formula in guideline 12.1 as amended by the Committee of Bar Examiners in April 2021. These amendments maintain the 40 percent cumulative pass rate requirement and also confirm that the graduates' results on the October 2020 bar exam are included as if that bar exam took place in July 2021 as originally scheduled. Regarding the Provisional Licensure Program's Expanded Program which includes an alternative pathway to licensure, the MPR calculation excludes those graduates who were participating in the program as of July 1 but includes those graduates who completed the alternative pathway to licensure by July 1 in both the numerator and the denominator, just as would be done for those who passed the bar exam.

All CALS reported an increase in the MPR between 2020 and 2021. Factors include the reduction in the bar exam cut score that took effect starting with the October 2020 bar exam, and the addition of the amendments described above.

Sixteen of eighteen accredited law schools reported compliant 2021 MPR values. These values range from 49.1 percent to 77.7 percent.

One of these law schools, John F. Kennedy School of Law at Northcentral University, has been on probation because its 2020 MPR was below 40 percent, but this year, that law school reported an MPR of 41.9 percent; the CBE will discuss whether to end that law school's probation today.

The remaining two CALS continued to report MPR values below 40 percent, as they did last year:

- Lincoln Law School of San Jose reported a 2021 MPR of 36.5 percent, up from 31.5 percent in 2020
- San Francisco Law School reported a 2021 MPR value of 39.0 percent, up from 36.0 percent in 2020

These law schools' probationary terms will be reviewed in a separate item today.

## **FISCAL/PERSONNEL IMPACT**

None

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends that the 2021 MPR compliance reporting as set forth in Attachment A be published on the State Bar's website, that those law schools reporting a value of 40 percent or more be considered in compliance, pending any further discussion regarding John F. Kennedy School of Law at Northcentral University today. It is further recommended that all CALS be directed to add these updated figures to their disclosure documents, including the disclosure required pursuant to California Business and Professions Code section 6061.7(a), which should then be reposted as soon as possible with this updated information.

## **PROPOSED MOTION**

**Should the Committee of Bar Examiners agree with the staff recommendation, the following motion should be made:**

**MOVE**, that the Committee of Bar Examiners receives and files the 2021 MPR compliance report as set forth in Attachment A, directs that it be published on the State Bar's website and further directs that each California accredited law school add its 2021 MPR value to its disclosure documents, including the disclosure required pursuant to California Business and Professions Code section 6061.7(a) to be reposted on each school's website, and accepts those law schools reporting a value of 40 percent or more as in compliance, pending any further discussion of the status of John F. Kennedy School of Law at Northcentral University,

## **ATTACHMENT LIST**

- A. 2021 Minimum Cumulative Five-Year Bar Examination Pass Rates for California Accredited Law Schools**



# The State Bar of California

## OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS

### 2021 Minimum Cumulative Five-Year Bar Examination Pass Rates for California Accredited Law Schools (MPR)

Five-Year Reporting Period: August 1, 2015–July 31, 2020<sup>1</sup>

California Accredited Law Schools (CALs) must “maintain a minimum, [five-year] cumulative bar examination pass rate” of 40 percent or more, as calculated under Guideline 12.1 of the [Guidelines for Accredited Law School Rules](#). Schools report their MPR on July 1 and the State Bar posts these figures in August.

Law schools approved by the American Bar Association’s Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the State Bar must maintain a 75 percent two-year cumulative pass rate under Standard 316. Unaccredited law schools are not required to maintain a minimum bar pass rate.

California Accredited Law School	2018 MPR (%)	2019 MPR (%)	2020 MPR (%)	2021 MPR (%)
Cal Northern School of Law	72.9	73.9	71.1	75.7
Concord Law School, Purdue University Global	NA	NA	NA	56.3
Empire College School of Law	55.4	46.9	46.1	59.3
Glendale University College of Law	66.7	62.2	64.3	77.1
Humphreys College Laurence Drivon School of Law	45.6	41.9	46.0	52.3
Lincoln Law School of Sacramento	66.7	60.8	60.1	66.3
*Lincoln Law School of San Jose	56.1	44.1	31.5	36.5
Monterey College of Law	47.9	54.3	53.7	53.8
Northwestern California University School of Law	NA	NA	NA	58.3
Northcentral University, John F. Kennedy School of Law	48.8	44.4	39.7	41.9
*San Francisco Law School	46.2	41.7	36.0	39.0
San Joaquin College of Law	77.4	72.4	68.8	77.7
Santa Barbara and Ventura Colleges of Law	58.9	57.7	58.0	65.4
St. Francis Law School	NA	NA	NA	59.3
Thomas Jefferson School of Law	70.5	67.4	61.7	65.6
Trinity Law School	44.6	44.7	44.1	47.3
University of La Verne College of Law	...	69.0	66.0	75.1
University of West Los Angeles	54.1	50.0	41.8	49.4

<sup>1</sup> The 2021 MPR includes the results of the October 2021 bar exam, as well as the results of the February 2021 bar exam for those who graduated in March 2016 or later.

July 1, 2021

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\*Must raise MPR to at least 40 percent by July 1, 2022 under the terms of its probation, or the school's accreditation may be at risk. If accreditation is terminated, the law school may apply to operate as an unaccredited law school.