

**Republic of the Philippines
SUPREME COURT
Manila**

Office of the Bar Confidant

**GUIDE AND RULES OF CONDUCT
TO THE 2016 BAR EXAMINATIONS**

The Supreme Court, in its desire to serve the interests of the Bar examinees and to contribute to their success in the 2016 Bar Examinations, has issued this Guide to advise them on how to best approach the examinations. This Guide contains as well the rules that every Bar examinee should observe in his/her conduct during the examinations for its orderly implementation, taking into account not only the interests of the Bar examinees, but of the University hosting the examinations, the Bar personnel conducting the examinations, and the public at large.

Every Bar examinee should read this Guide thoroughly as part of his/her preparation.

Preparing for the Examinations

Knowing the Coverage

The coverage of the 2016 Bar Examinations is precisely defined in the Syllabi (with a separate Syllabus issued for every Bar subject) that the Court has issued. The 2016 Bar Examinations Syllabi have been uploaded in the Supreme Court Website. The Bar examinees need not study materials not covered by the Syllabi.

May 31, 2015 is the cut-off date for laws and jurisprudence covered by the 2016 Bar Examinations. No cut-off dates exist for **principles of law**. In other words, a principle of law appearing in the Court's cases decided after May 31, 2015 is not excluded from the coverage of the examinations simply because the principle of law appeared in a case decided after the cut-off date.

Managing the Examinations

Performing well in the Bar Examinations requires a good understanding of the basic principles of law and of relevant jurisprudence, and an adequate ability to understand and communicate in the English language.

Knowledge of English comes from the Bar examinee's accumulated study of, and experience, in communicating in this language. Knowledge of law, on the other hand, is based on years of study in law school and in the Bar review classes. In order to pass the Bar examinations, the examinees need to exert effort to be as precise as possible in their knowledge of the law and in communicating this knowledge during the examinations.

Some Tips in Answering Bar Examination Questions in General

1. Every Bar examinee should master this **Guide** and the examination **Instructions** on the cover page of every **Questionnaire**.
2. The examinee should read and examine the Instructions on the cover page of the Bar Questionnaires as soon as they are allowed to do so by the headwatcher. The number of pages as stated in the Instructions, and the number of pages in the distributed questionnaires, should carefully be compared. The correct number of questions should be confirmed to ensure that the Questionnaire is accurate and has no missing or duplicated pages.
3. Only one booklet shall be used in answering the questions. Bar questions should be answered in the same order of the questions posted in the Questionnaire.
4. After confirming the correct number of questions, the Bar examinee should plan his/her

answering time and, accordingly, pace himself/herself. The examination in every subject is for four (4) hours, and the questions have been formulated and calculated to be answerable within this time, with an allowance for the review of the examinee's answers. Since there will only be twenty (20) questions, the examinee will have a maximum time of twelve (12) minutes per question. If there are two (2) sub-questions, the maximum time is six (6) minutes per sub-question.

5. The examinee is allowed to mark the question/s the answer/s to which he/she is not sure of, and to move on to the succeeding questions, in order not to waste precious time. The examinee can later return to the more difficult questions initially marked and left unanswered.

Some Tips in Answering Essay Questions

1. Read each question carefully for its full and complete understanding. Pay particular attention to the directive or direction word/s the question uses. Examples of direction words are: *argue, compare, contrast, define, decide, and distinguish*. The answer should respond to what these directives or direction words exactly require.

2. Again, time planning and pacing are essential, remembering that the essay questions contain the bulk at 100% of the examinations.

3. Every well-written question specifically asks for the resolution of the legal problem posed. The examinee's task is to provide the resolution that the question calls for, nothing more and nothing less, with sufficient explanation of how the examinee arrives at his/her conclusion. Note that in a 5-point question, the examiner can give credit even if the answer is not exactly correct but the answer is well-written and logical. Consider, however, that the use of the "shotgun" approach in answering questions may not be the best approach as it indicates the lack of exact or specific knowledge about the questions asked.

4. Go straight to the point if you know the exact answer to the question. As a good rule to follow, draw an outline of the proposed answer: after reading the question and understanding what it requires, take some time to note (mentally or on a scratch paper) a brief outline of the proposed answer. **The examinee can draft the outline on the questionnaire but not on the exam booklet.** The outline allows him/her to systematically present all the pertinent information in a logical order.

5. Write clearly and legibly. Use black, blue, or blue-black ink only. Pencils will no longer be used or allowed for the examinations. **As a rule, five to six words per line significantly contribute to readability.**

6. The examinee can help the examiner's assessment of the answer by providing clues to the line of thinking used and the answer's pattern of organization. Use transitional words such as: *first, second, next, finally, on the other hand, consequently, furthermore, and in conclusion*.

7. Answers should always be proofread. An exam is also a test of the examinee's writing ability—he/she should spend some time to review his/her answer. Look for mistakes in grammar and punctuation, check for misspelled or missing words and omit needless words.

8. Make sure no uncalled for name and distinguishing or identifying mark are placed in one's notebook. Care should be taken not to use a specific name when no such name is called for. Do not write any prayer to God or any special plea addressed to the examiner. **Leaving or making a distinguishing or identifying mark in the exam booklet is classified as cheating and can subject the examinee to disqualification for the whole examinations.**

Practice Exams

A good practice for law school/review classes to observe is to hold practice examination sessions with the Bar candidates on the essay formats. In evaluating these practice exams, attention should be given to both the law and the Bar candidate's presentation and use of English. **In many instances, incorrect English is more serious as a problem than the lack of precise knowledge of law, and has been the cause of high failure rates.**

The Actual Bar Examinations

Before the Examinations

1. UST's España gates **open** at 5:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon on examination days and **close** thirty (30) minutes before the given examination time. After the gates close, no one will be allowed to enter without the permission of the Bar Chairperson or, in his absence, the Bar Confidant.

Failure to take the examination in a subject disqualifies the examinee from taking the rest of the Bar examinations.

No refund of the examination fee will be allowed.

2. Bar examinees assigned to take their examinations at the St. Martin de Porres Building (Medicine Building) and at St. Raymond's Building (AB/Commerce Building) may enter the campus only through Gates 2 or 3 along España Boulevard.

3. Bar examinees should always wear their **color-coded building assignment cards** prominently displayed on their chests, together with their **Notice of Admission/Permit**. Together, these two items of identification shall serve as the Bar examinee's pass for admission into the UNIVERSITY compound, into his/her assigned building, and into the assigned room. Avoid losing any of these requirements as the absence of one or the other can bar the examinee from admission into the campus.

4. Before going to his/her assigned building, every examinee is obliged to submit himself/herself to inspection and shall deposit all **electronic gadgets (cellphones, iPad, tablets, laptops, and the like)** in his/her possession, if any, to the security personnel assigned at the entrance. **Digital or smart watches are not allowed inside the examination rooms.**

5. **Bringing of deadly weapons anywhere within the University is strictly prohibited.** Any such weapon found in the examinee's person shall be confiscated, and the incident shall be reported to the Office of the Bar Confidant for assessment if further investigation is warranted for **violation of the Bar Examinations Rules of Conduct.**

6. Possession of **alcoholic drinks** and **cigarettes** is not allowed anywhere within the University campus. Smoking is strictly prohibited within the said campus.

Alcoholic drinks are subject to confiscation, and the fact of confiscation shall be reported to the Office of the Bar Confidant for assessment if further investigation is warranted. The same rule applies for drinking of alcoholic drinks and for smoking inside the University at any time on the Bar examination days.

Possession and drinking of alcoholic drinks, and smoking, are considered **violations of the Bar Examinations Rules of Conduct.**

7. Pursuant to its Styro-Free campaign, UST prohibits the use of styrofoam/polystyrene inside its premises. Examinees who will bring their own lunch are encouraged to place their food in non-styrofoam lunchboxes or in carton containers.

8. Bar examinees are not allowed to alight from or park their vehicles inside the University.

9. Upon arrival at their assigned examination building in the morning of each examination day, they should consult the bulletin boards along the ground corridor and at their assigned floors to confirm their room assignments.

10. Bar examinees are required to immediately proceed to their assigned rooms and are not to wander around upon arrival at their assigned examination buildings.

During the Examinations

1. Bar examinees shall be allowed to enter their assigned rooms before the start of the examination upon submission of their Notice of Admission to, and upon confirmation of their identification through their color-coded IDs by, the headwatcher. They are required to conduct themselves properly and avoid loud discussions and conversations with other Bar examinees. Everyone is encouraged to attend to their personal toilet and other needs before the FIRST BELL (at 7:30 a.m.; 1:30 p.m.)

2. At the sound of the FIRST BELL, all books, notes, and snacks shall be entrusted to the headwatcher. Then the Bar examinee shall be handed his/her exam notebook. Snacks, except for water and candies, are not allowed inside the examination rooms. Each examinee is entitled to bring in one (1) bottle of water only.

3. The Bar examinee may begin answering only at the sound of the SECOND BELL (at 8:00 a.m.; 2:00 p.m.).

An examinee will be considered cheating if caught with notes or “codigos” during the examination, or if caught copying or allowing the copying of examination answers by another Bar examinee. Conversing or talking to other bar examinees during the examination shall be *prima facie* evidence of cheating. Any communication with another Bar candidate can be done only with the prior permission and in the presence of the exam headwatcher. Remember that there is a CCTV camera in each examination room.

4. Eating lunch is allowed only at the Quadricentennial Park located at the back of the Main Building, on park benches, the Gazebo Area inside the Main Building, and inside the canteens located in the Benavides and St. Martin de Porres Buildings. Examinees may also take their lunch outside the University campus but must return before the University gates close, *i.e.*, thirty (30) minutes before the next examination.

Rules in Writing on your Exam Booklet

1. Only sign pens and fountain pens in permanent blue, blue-black or black ink shall be used in writing answers. Changes in the color of the ink used shall not be allowed. Changes in the style of handwriting within one notebook should be avoided.

2. Answers should be written legibly and erasures should be avoided. In case of a mistake, the Bar examinee should simply draw a line across the word or words to be changed or erased. **NO ERASURES OR TEARING-OFF OF ANY PAGE OF THE NOTEBOOK IS ALLOWED.**

3. **THE BAR EXAMINEE'S NAME CANNOT BE WRITTEN IN ANY PART OF THE NOTEBOOK NOR IS ANY UNNECESSARY MARKING OR IMPERTINENT EXPRESSION ALLOWED TO BE MADE ANYWHERE IN THE NOTEBOOK.** Names of persons other than those specifically mentioned in the questionnaire cannot be used. Unless particular names are called for, persons shall be referred to by letters of the alphabet such as A, B, C, etc.

As a reminder, prayers or personal notes written in the examination notebook shall be considered as markings that shall disqualify the Bar examinee from the WHOLE bar examinations.

4. Answers should be written on the face or side of the page of the examination notebook fronting the examinee. In case all the front sides of all pages have been used, the examinee may use the back pages of the exam notebook starting from the first page and every page thereafter. In case of any doubt in this regard, directions should be secured from the headwatcher.

5. The THIRD BELL (11:30 a.m.; 5:30 p.m.) signals that only thirty (30) minutes are left before the end of the examination. The FOURTH BELL (11:55 a.m.; 5:55 p.m.) signifies that only five (5) minutes are left before the end of the examination. The FIFTH BELL signifies the end of the examination.

6. A Bar examinee finishing the exam before the FIFTH BELL may immediately submit his/her examination notebook to the headwatcher and shall forthwith leave the room.

At the FIFTH BELL (12:00 noon; 6:00 p.m.), all Bar examinees should submit their examination notebooks, finished or unfinished. **Failure to submit the examination booklet as required will result in the examinee's disqualification.** For example, any Bar examinee who leaves the assigned room for any length of time however brief, without submitting his/her examination notebook, can no longer make a submission and is considered disqualified from the whole Bar Examinations.

7. The examinees can bring home the examination questionnaires or submit them together with the examination notebooks. A copy of the questionnaire in every Bar subject will also be seasonably posted in the Supreme Court website. Although an examinee can bring home the questionnaire for every Bar subject, it is best for a Bar examinee to clear his/her mind of the past examination and to move on to the next subject.

8. After every examination and before leaving the room, the Bar examinee should ask for his/her Notice of Admission from the headwatcher, who shall accomplish the certification found at the back of the Notice of Admission as proof of the examinee's completion of the examination.

9. The Notice of Admission will be retained by the headwatcher at the end of the last Bar examination, *i.e.*, after the Legal Ethics examination on the 4th Sunday, for submission to the Office of the Bar Confidant as required.

REMINDERS:

1. Every Bar examinee with special medical or other needs (*e.g.*, insulin injections or taking medications during examination hours) should so inform the Office of the Bar Confidant on or before October 28, 2016 so that appropriate preparations can be made or taken well ahead of examination time.

2. If the Bar examinee feels sick during the actual examination, he/she should immediately call the attention of the headwatcher or watcher so that appropriate action may be taken. The Court has prepared for this contingency.

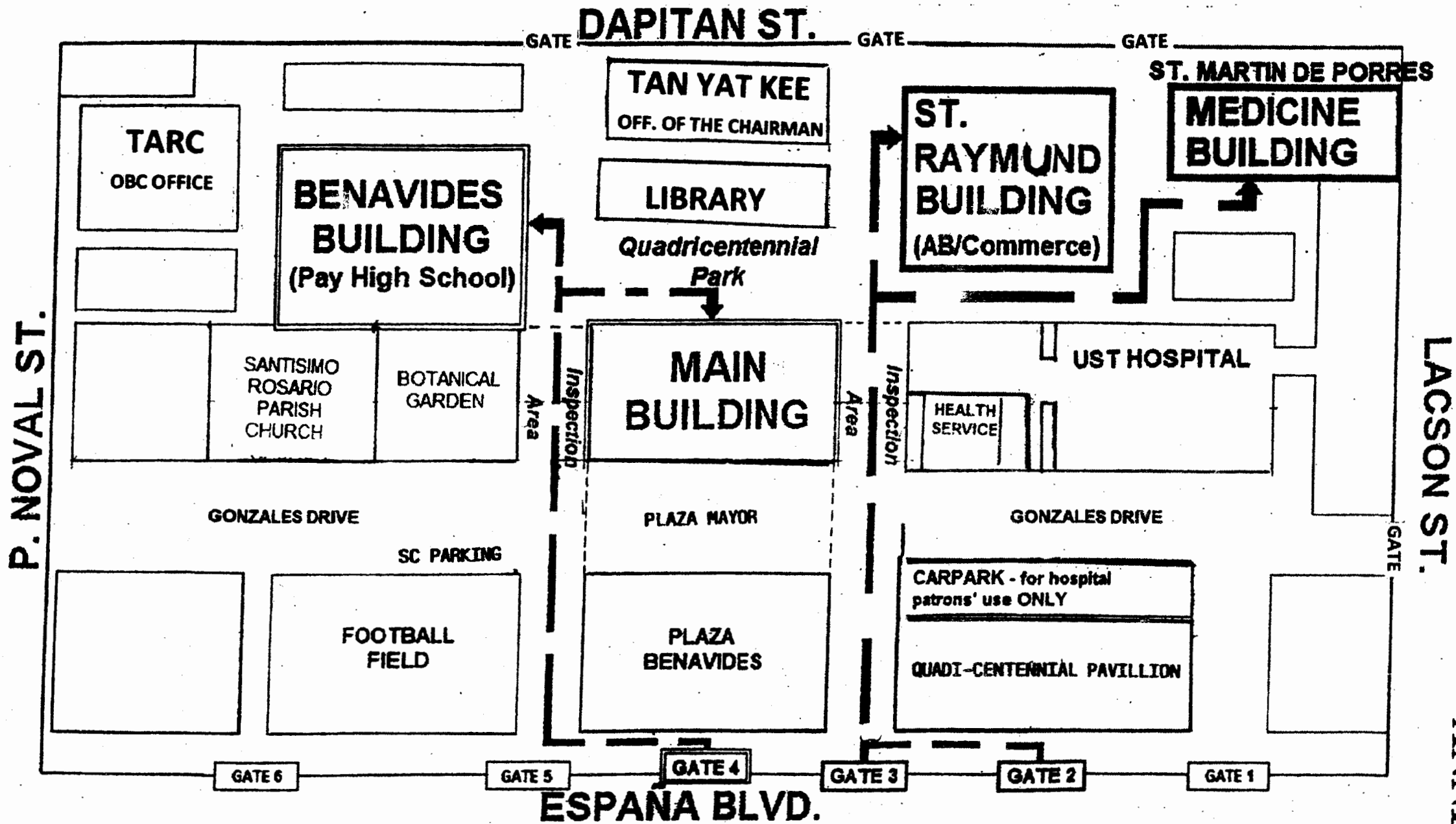
3. Every Bar examinee should attend to his/her toilet needs before the FIRST BELL. If he/she needs to go to the toilet at any time during the actual examination, the attention of the headwatcher or watcher should be called for directions on the procedures to observe in these eventualities.

4. It may be advisable to bring extra t-shirts and umbrellas. UST rooms are fully air-conditioned. For the examinees' comfort and convenience, they may need to bring sweaters or jackets.

5. **IT IS MANDATORY TO USE ONLY TRANSPARENT OR SEE-THROUGH BAGS, ZIP-LOCK BAGS, PURSES, CONTAINERS AND THE LIKE BY EXAMINEES DURING THE BAR EXAMINATIONS.** (In the Resolution dated 30 September 2014 in **Bar Matter No. 2819 [In Re: Application to Take the 2014 Bar Examinations]**, the Court, for security measures, **DIRECTED** the bar examinees to put their books, pens, food, water and other personal items inside transparent or see-through bags, clear ziplock bags, pouches, lunch boxes, clear water containers and other similar containers.)

FOR STRICT COMPLIANCE.


MA. CRISTINA E. LAYUSA
Deputy Clerk of Court and Bar Confidant



1. Enter only through España Blvd. wearing your I.D.
2. Only Bar examinees with I.D.'s can go down along España Blvd. sidewalk.
3. Examinees going to St. Martin De Porres Bldg. (Medicine Bldg.) and St. Raymund 's Bldg. (AB/ Commerce Bldg.) shall enter at Gate 2 & 3.
4. Examinees going to Benauides Bldg. (Pay High School Bldg.) and the Main Bldg. shall enter through Gate 4 only.