



Republic of the Philippines  
Supreme Court  
Manila

OFFICE OF THE BAR CONFIDANT

BAR BULLETIN NO. 4

## GUIDE AND RULES OF CONDUCT TO THE 2019 BAR EXAMINATIONS

The Supreme Court, in its desire to serve the interests of the Bar examinees and to contribute to their success in the 2019 Bar Examinations, has issued this Guide to advise them on how to best prepare for the examinations. This Guide contains the rules of conduct that Bar examinees should observe during the examinations for its orderly implementation, taking into account the interests not only of the Bar examinees, but also of the University hosting the examinations, the Bar personnel conducting the examinations, and the public at large.

**All Bar examinees should read this Guide thoroughly as part of their preparation.**

### PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATIONS

#### **Knowing the Coverage**

The coverage of the 2019 Bar Examinations is precisely defined in the Syllabi, which have been uploaded in the Supreme Court Website. As stated in the Message from the Bar Chairperson issued with the Syllabi, “all questions would only revolve around the laws, rules, issuances, and jurisprudence *pertinent* to the key topics stated therein as of the cut-off date, *i.e.*, **June 30, 2018.**” Hence, the Bar examinees need not study materials not covered in the Syllabi.

**Principles of law** are not covered by the cut-off period stated. Hence, any principle of law that appeared in the Court’s decisions after June 30, 2018 is not excluded from the coverage of the examinations.

#### **Managing the Examinations**

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

Proficiency in English comes from the examinees’ 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 communicating their knowledge of the law in their answers.

### **Some Tips in Answering Bar Examination Questions in General**

1. The examinees should master this **Guide** and the **Instructions** on the cover page of every Questionnaire. This Guide is released well ahead of time for the examinees' reference.
2. They should read and examine the Instructions on the cover page of every Questionnaire as soon as they are allowed to do so by the head watcher. The number of pages stated in the Instructions should be carefully compared with the actual number of pages in the distributed Questionnaire. The correct number of questions should be verified to ensure that the Questionnaire has no missing or duplicated pages.
3. After confirming the correct number of pages and questions, the examinees should plan their answering time, and accordingly, pace themselves. The time allotted for the examination in every subject is 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 examinees' answers.
4. The examinees shall be given one (1) Questionnaire with two parts (*i.e.*, Part I and Part II) and two (2) conjoined booklets. Answers to questions in Part I of the Questionnaire should be written in the Part I booklet, while answers to questions in Part II of the Questionnaire should be written in the Part II booklet. **The cover, as well as the first page of the two (2) booklets, shall bear the labels "Part I" and "Part II", respectively. The Questionnaire shall also clearly indicate the labels "Part I" and "Part II" for the corresponding portions.**
5. The examinees are allowed to mark the question/s, the answer/s to which they are not sure of, and move on to the succeeding questions in order not to waste precious time. They can later return to those initially marked questions.

### **Some Tips in Answering Essay Questions**

1. All questions are essay-type which simply means that there are no multiple choice questions.
2. Read each question carefully to fully and completely understand it. Pay particular attention to the directive or direction word/s used in the question. Examples of direction words are: *explain, argue, compare, contrast, define, decide, and distinguish*. The answers should respond to what these directives or direction words exactly require.
3. The examinees' answers should demonstrate their ability to analyze the facts, apply the pertinent law and jurisprudence, and arrive at a sound or logical conclusion. A mere "yes" or "no" answer, without any corresponding explanation or discussion, may not be given full credit. Thus, always briefly but fully explain your answers even though the question does not expressly ask for an explanation.
4. Every well-written question specifically asks for the resolution of a specific legal problem. The examinees' task is to provide the resolution called for by the question, with sufficient explanation on how the conclusion was arrived at. Note that in a 5-point question, for instance, the examiner can give credit if the answer is well-written and logical even if not accurate. Take caution, however, that the use of the "shotgun" approach in answering questions may not be the best strategy as it indicates the lack of exact or specific knowledge about the questions.

5. Answer the questions briefly and directly. As a good rule to follow, after reading and understanding each question, the examinees can create (mentally or on the Questionnaire) a brief outline of the proposed answer. They can draft the outline on the Questionnaire but not on the booklets. The outline allows them to systematically present all the pertinent information in a logical order.
6. Write clearly and legibly. As a rule, writing five to six words per line significantly contributes to readability.
7. The examinees can help the examiner's assessment of the answer by providing clues to their line of thinking and pattern of organization. Use transitional words such as: *first, second, next, finally, on the other hand, consequently, furthermore, and in conclusion.*
8. Answers should always be proofread. An exam is also a test of the examinees' writing ability; they should spend some time to review their answers. Look for mistakes in grammar and punctuation, check for misspelled or missing words, and omit needless words.
9. Make sure no distinguishing or identifying marks are placed in the booklets. Care should be taken not to use any specific name when no such name is called for or used in the question. Do not write any prayer to God or any special plea addressed to the examiner. **Leaving or making any 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**

Bar examinees are encouraged to participate in practice examination sessions where they can focus not only on the application of legal knowledge, but also on their proficiency in the English language and presentation of answers. In many instances, incorrect English is a more serious 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. The University's España gates will open at 4:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon on the examination days and will close thirty (30) minutes before the given examination time. After the gates are closed, no one will be allowed to enter without the permission of the Bar Chairperson or, in the latter's absence, the Bar Confidant.

Failure to take the examination in any subject disqualifies the examinee from taking the remaining Bar examinations. No refund of the examination fee will be allowed.

2. Bar examinees are not allowed to bring in, alight from, or park their vehicles inside the University.
3. Bar examinees assigned to take their examinations at the St. Martin de Porres Building (Medicine Building) and at the St. Raymond's Building (AB/Commerce Building), as well as the Albertus Magnus Building (Education Building) if applicable, may enter the campus only through Gates 2 or 3 along España Boulevard.

4. 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 examinees' pass to enter into the University compound, as well as their assigned building and room. Avoid losing any of these items as the absence of either one can bar the examinee from admission into the University.
5. Before going to their assigned buildings, examinees are required to submit themselves to a security check/inspection and to deposit all communication devices, electronic gadgets (cellphones, tablets, laptops, watches, cameras and the like), and other prohibited items in their possession, if any, to the security personnel assigned at the designated inspection areas. **Analog, digital, or smart watches shall not be allowed inside the examination rooms.**
6. **Bringing of deadly weapons inside the University is strictly prohibited and is considered a violation of the Bar Examinations Rules of Conduct.** This prohibition applies even to those who have permits to carry firearms outside of their residence. Any such weapon found on 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.
7. Possession of **alcoholic drinks and/or cigarettes** anywhere within the University campus is not allowed. Alcoholic drinks and/or cigarettes are subject to confiscation, and the incident shall be reported to the Office of the Bar Confidant for assessment if further investigation is warranted.

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

8. Pursuant to its Styro-Free campaign, the University prohibits the use of styrofoam/polystyrene inside its premises. Hence, the examinees are encouraged to use or place their food/snacks in non-styrofoam containers or in carton containers.

To minimize plastic waste, the examinees are likewise encouraged to bring their drinks in transparent reusable tumblers instead of disposable plastic bottles.

9. Upon arrival at their assigned building in the morning of each examination day, the examinees should confirm their room assignments by checking the bulletin boards along the ground floor corridor and at their assigned floors.
10. Bar examinees are required to immediately proceed to their assigned rooms and not to loiter around in their assigned examination buildings.

### **During the Examinations**

1. Before the start of the examination, the examinees shall only be allowed inside their assigned rooms upon submission of their Notice of Admission to, and upon confirmation of their identification through their color-coded assignment cards by, the head watcher. They are required to conduct themselves properly and avoid loud discussions and conversations with other examinees prior to the examinations. They must leave their books, notes, and food outside the rooms. 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**, no examinee shall be allowed to leave the room. Except for water and candies, light snacks are not allowed inside the rooms, but these

can be accessed during the examinations with the permission of the head watcher or watcher.

3. The examination booklets shall be distributed at the sound of the **FIRST BELL**. Pursuant to the Court's Resolution dated 15 January 2019, the examinees shall each be given **one (1) Questionnaire** (containing Parts I and II) and **two (2) conjoined booklets** (marked Part I and Part II, respectively) where the answers corresponding to each Questionnaire shall be written. The Questionnaire shall have two parts, but the questions shall be continuously numbered. For example, Part I will contain questions A.1 to A.10 while Part II will contain questions B.11 to B.20.
4. The examinees may begin answering only at the sound of the **SECOND BELL (at 8:00 a.m.; 2:00 p.m.)**. Four (4) hours shall be allotted for each examination.

**It will be considered cheating if an examinee is caught with notes or "codigos" during the examination, or if caught copying or allowing another examinee to copy his/her examination answers. Conversing with or talking to other examinees during the examination shall be *prima facie* evidence of cheating. Communicating with another examinee may be done only with the prior permission and in the presence of the head watcher. Remember that there are CCTV cameras in the examination rooms.**

5. Rules in writing on the examination booklets:
  - 5.1. Write the answers to the questions in Parts I and II of the Questionnaire in the corresponding examination booklet – Part I and Part II. **Answers written in the wrong booklet shall not be given any credit.**
  - 5.2. Examinees shall begin writing their answers on the second page of the booklets since the first page of every booklet contains stickered bar codes for security. The bar codes are scratchproof, but the examinees must not write, stain, or fold them as this may render the bar codes unreadable by the machine scanner.
  - 5.3. Bar questions should be answered in the same order as printed in the Questionnaire. Answer each numbered question on a separate page; an answer to a sub-question under the same number may be written continuously on the same page and succeeding pages until completed.
  - 5.4. The examinees shall have the discretion on how to use the time allotted for answering the questions. They may opt to begin answering a particular part of the examination which they feel is relatively easier than the others, and just return to answer the more difficult questions initially left unanswered, provided that the order of the Bar questions as printed in the Questionnaire is maintained.
  - 5.5. Only sign pens and fountain pens in **permanent blue or black ink** shall be used in writing answers. Changes in the color of the ink used shall not be allowed. Pencils are not allowed to be used for answering the questions. Changes in the style of handwriting within one booklet should be avoided.
  - 5.6. Answers should be written legibly and erasures should be avoided. In case of a mistake, simply draw a line across the word or words to be changed or erased. **ERASURES OR TEARING-OFF OF ANY PAGE OF THE BOOKLETS IS NOT ALLOWED.**
  - 5.7. Answers should be written on the face or the page on the right side of the examination booklet fronting the examinee. In case all the front sides of all pages

have been used, the examinee may use the back/left pages of the exam booklet starting from the second page and every page thereafter. In case of any doubt in this regard, directions should be secured from the head watcher.

6. 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 (12:00 n.n.; 6:00 p.m.)** signifies the end of the examination.
7. Examinees who shall finish the exam before the FIFTH BELL may immediately submit their examination booklets to the head watcher and shall leave the room at once.

At the FIFTH BELL, all examinees shall count the number of pages used in both booklets, and thereafter, submit the two (2) examination booklets to the head watcher, finished or unfinished. **Failure to submit the booklets at the same time as required will result in the examinee's disqualification.** Submission of only one booklet, either marked as Part I or Part II, shall likewise disqualify the bar examinee. Moreover, examinees who leave the assigned room for any length of time, however brief, without submitting their examination booklets to the head watcher, can no longer make a submission and shall be disqualified from the whole Bar Examinations.

8. The Bar examinees can either bring home the Questionnaires or submit them together with the booklets. A copy of the Questionnaire in every Bar subject will be seasonably posted on the Supreme Court website. Although examinees can bring home the Questionnaire for every Bar subject, it is best for the examinees to clear their minds of the past examination and to move on to the next subject.
9. After every examination and before leaving the room, the examinees should ask for their Notice of Admission from the head watcher, who shall accomplish the certification found at the back of the Notice of Admission as proof of the examinees' completion of the examination.

However, at the end of the last Bar examination, *i.e.*, after the Legal and Judicial Ethics and Practical Exercises examination on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, the examinees' Notice of Admission shall be retained by the head watchers for submission to the Office of the Bar Confidant.

### **SPECIAL REMINDERS**

1. Every Bar examinee with special medical or other needs (*e.g.*, insulin injections or taking medications during examination hours) should inform the Office of the Bar Confidant on or before August 15, 2019 so that appropriate preparations can be made or taken well ahead of examination time.
2. If a Bar examinee feels sick during the actual examination, the attention of the head watcher or watcher should be called immediately so that appropriate action may be taken. The Court has prepared for this contingency.
3. As above-stated, Bar examinees should attend to their toilet needs before the FIRST BELL. If an examinee needs to go to the toilet at any time during the actual examination, the examinee should call the attention of the head watcher or watcher for directions on the procedure/s to be observed.
4. The University's rooms are fully air-conditioned. For the examinees' comfort and convenience, they may need to bring sweaters or jackets.

5. 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, inside the canteens of the Benavides and St. Martin de Porres Buildings, and, if applicable, inside the tents in front of the Albertus Magnus Building. Examinees may also take their lunch outside the University campus but must return before the University gates are closed, *i.e.*, thirty (30) minutes before the next examination.
6. The conduct of the 2019 Bar Examinations is an official function of the Supreme Court and is an integral part of every examinee's application for admission to the Philippine Bar. Thus, examinees are reminded to observe proper decorum, including dressing appropriately and comfortably. Examinees can wear only shirts, slacks, or denim pants, below-the-knee length dresses or skirts, and closed shoes.

The following kinds of attire are prohibited during the Bar Examinations:

- a. Gauzy, transparent, or net-like clothing;
  - (b) Sandos; sleeveless, strapless, or spaghetti-strapped blouses; tank tops (unless worn as an undershirt); and blouses with over-plunging necklines;
  - (c) Micro-mini skirts; walking shorts; cycling shorts; leggings; tights; jogging pants; Capri pants; distressed or torn jeans or pajamas;
  - (d) Sandals; step-ins exposing the toes; rubber sandals; slippers; or *bakya*.
7. **IT IS MANDATORY FOR EXAMINEES TO USE ONLY TRANSPARENT OR SEE-THROUGH BAGS, ZIP-LOCK BAGS, PURSES, CONTAINERS, AND THE LIKE 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 B. LAYUSA  
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