



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

OFFICE OF THE 2020/21 BAR CHAIRPERSON

BAR BULLETIN NO. 18, S. 2021

**ON THE MODALITY OF THE
NOVEMBER 2021 BAR EXAMINATIONS**

The Court *En Banc* has issued a February 8, 2021 Resolution approving a *digitalized, localized, and proctored* modality for the Bar Examinations, which will be held over the four Sundays of November 2021.

This comes on the heels of the Pilot (Mock) Bar Examinations, meant as a small-scale simulation to assess the viability of the proposed reforms, which was successfully carried out on January 31, 2021 in Metro Manila, Baguio, Cebu, and Davao. A total of 80 students divided in these four areas took two examinations through a computer software while being proctored in the testing rooms. This proved that a more equitable and inclusive Bar Examinations can be done, more so amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Bar Examinations shall be held on November 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2021. In preparation for this, the next steps are as follows:

First, proposals for local testing sites (law schools, et al.) shall be received, evaluated, and certified. The minimum requirements will be released next week, and applications may be accepted until April. Afterward, audit teams, which include personnel from the Office of the Bar Chairperson, Office of the Bar Confidant, Management Information Systems Office, and Security Division, shall be deployed to evaluate the testing sites. Certified testing sites will be announced before the period for applications to take the Bar Examinations begins.

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Simultaneously, the Court *En Banc* has authorized the Office of the Bar Chairperson to commence with the procurement process and hiring of personnel needed.

Second, after the local testing sites are determined, the Court will then announce the guidelines for application to take the Bar Examinations and start accepting such applications by May. Applications will be done through an Online Application System. Applicants need not go to Manila and visit the Office of the Bar Confidant, except when required to clarify the authenticity of the documents submitted. The Office of the Bar Confidant shall do this at a minimum, to reduce all applicants' expenses.

Third, those who have completed all the requirements to take the Bar Examinations will have the opportunity to download and familiarize themselves with the computer software to be used.

Fourth, for this year's Bar Examinations, examinees shall bring their own WiFi-enabled laptops, which must have an integrated display screen, keyboard, and trackpad or pointer device, with sufficient internal battery power. The laptops must run on Mac or Windows operating systems. The minimum system requirements are as follows:

For Windows:

1. Operating System: 32-bit and 64-bit versions of Windows 10 (versions: 1909, 2004 and 20H2) with the English (United States) Language Pack
2. Only genuine versions of Windows Operating Systems are allowed.
3. CPU Processor: 2.0 GHz Intel i3 processor or equivalent
4. RAM: 4GB or higher
5. Hard drive: highest recommended for the operating system or 4GB of available space.
6. For on-site support, and in order to back up the answer files to a USB drive, a working USB port is required. (Newer devices may require an adapter.)
7. For technical troubleshooting, account passwords, including BitLocker keys, may be required.
8. Internet connection for download, registration, exam download, upload and some exam features
9. Screen resolution should be at least 1024 x 768.

Please avoid:

1. For now: alternate versions of Windows 10, such as Windows RT and Windows 10 S. If you are using a Microsoft Surface device, Windows 10 "S mode" is *not* compatible.



2. Tablet devices
3. CPU Processor: Qualcomm Snapdragon chipsets
4. Virtualized environments or environments that require persistent network (local or otherwise) connections during secure exams. This includes, but is not limited to, VMWare, Parallels, Citrix workspace, virtual disks, streamed images, etc.

For Mac:

1. Operating system versions: OS X 10.14 (Mojave), macOS Catalina (10.15), macOS Big Sur (11.0)
2. Only genuine versions of Mac operating systems are allowed.
3. CPU: Intel processor. Devices using Apple's M1 processor and Apple Rosetta 2 are allowed.
4. RAM: 4GB or higher
5. Hard Drive: 4GB or higher available space
6. For on-site support, and in order to back-up the answer files to a USB drive, a working USB port is required (newer devices may require an adaptor).
7. For technical troubleshooting, account passwords including device passwords may be required.
8. Internet connection for download, registration, exam download, and upload

Please avoid:

1. Server version of Mac OS X
2. Virtual operating systems such as Microsoft's Virtual Machine, Parallels, VMware, VMware Fusion, or any other virtual environments
3. Virtualized environments or environments that require persistent network (local or otherwise) connections during secure exams. This includes, but is not limited to, VMWare, Parallels, Citrix workspace, virtual disks, streamed images, etc.

These minimum system requirements cannot be waived or bypassed; otherwise, the software will not work correctly. Just the same, examinees are not required to buy the latest model, as long as their laptops comply with the minimum system requirements. No other digital device will be allowed inside the testing sites.

Desktop computers, Chromebooks, Android devices, Linux-based devices, iOS devices, smartphones, and tablets are not allowed.



Additionally, although the computer software is designed to prohibit examinees from exiting the application and accessing other applications during the test proper, examinees are advised not to store any file in their laptops that has a reasonable connection with the substance and procedure of the examinations. Examinees are advised to start organizing their digital filing system so that they may offload their law-related files into an external disk or other devices before taking the Bar Examinations.

While the modality has been digitalized, the Bar Examinations shall not be taken remotely. Examinees will still walk into testing rooms and will be proctored while taking the exams. Surveillance cameras will also be installed in all testing rooms. Examinees will be assigned in testing centers in a locality closest to their residence or the school they graduated from, or for any other consideration. This determination shall depend on the final list of schools that would qualify as local testing sites.

Fifth, proper hygiene protocols will be observed during the Bar Examinations, which will include COVID-19 testing and proper physical distancing inside the testing rooms. The Court will explore arrangements for a predominantly Saliva RT-PCR testing modality in each of the testing sites.

Sixth, on the examination days, the computer hardware shall be thoroughly checked by Court personnel. Examinees shall also be asked to sign the Honor Code, which reads:

“I acknowledge that the lawyer’s oath shall be applicable to me from the time I apply to become a lawyer. On my honor, I declare that I have not done and will not do any act that can be construed as cheating by the Bar Chairperson or by the Supreme Court. Likewise, I commit not to aid or tolerate anyone who commits or attempts to commit any form of cheating before, during, and after the Bar Examinations. I commit to report and stand as witness to any act of dishonesty employed in the Bar Examinations. Any failure on my part to comply with these commitments may constitute grounds for my permanent disqualification for this and any future bar examinations.”

Seventh, while the examinations shall be digitalized, the traditional mode of handwritten examinations will still be allowed, but only in very exceptional cases where it can be adequately proven that the examinee suffers from a physical disability that does not permit them to take the examinations through a computer.

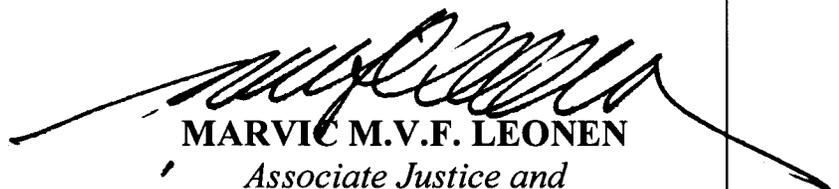
Eighth, examiners shall also grade the Bar Examinations digitally. This makes it possible to recruit some subject matter experts from outside Metro Manila for the first time, making the assessment of the Bar Examinations even more inclusive.

For questions and other clarifications, a hotline and dedicated email will be made available by the end of February.

No other information other than those contained in Bar Bulletins is authorized. Those concerned should be compassionate enough not to create or spread false and unverified information.

Study well. Study with passion. Take care of yourselves and each other.

February 14, 2021.



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