



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

OFFICE OF THE 2023 BAR CHAIR

BAR BULLETIN No. 7
Series of 2023

ACADEMIC HONESTY

As stated in Bar Bulletin No. 1, Series of 2023, the 2023 Bar Examinations shall consist of entry-level essay questions which shall test knowledge of fundamental legal principles and competence for basic skills required of a beginner lawyer in the Philippines.

This notwithstanding, the examinations shall uphold and maintain the highest standards of excellence and integrity. It shall adopt a zero-tolerance policy against cheating and all other forms of academic dishonesty.

Accordingly, all Bar examinees shall accomplish the *Honor Code, Health Liability Waiver, and Other Undertakings for the 2023 Bar Examinees*¹ (Honor Code) where they pledge to the 2023 Bar Chairperson and the Supreme Court that they shall not do any act that may be construed as cheating or dishonesty. They shall also commit therein (a) not to aid or tolerate anyone who attempts or commits any form of cheating or dishonesty before, during, and after the Bar Examinations; and (b) to report and stand as witness to any act of dishonesty regarding the examinations.

¹ This Form may now be downloaded through the SC Microsite at <https://sc.judiciary.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Honor-Code-Health-Liability-Waiver-and-Other-Undertakings-for-the-2023-Bar-Examinees.pdf> and from BARISTA. The Form must be printed in Letter size (8.5 x 11 inches) white paper and in black ink.

Accomplishment and submission of the Honor Code is mandatory. Please note that pursuant to Bar Bulletin No. 6, Series of 2023, examinees who will be unable to present their accomplished *Honor Code* to the inspecting Bar personnel upon ingress may be barred entry to the LTC.

Actionable examinee behavior constituting grounds for disqualification and/or disciplinary sanctions may be classified as either:

- (1) *Prohibited* – those that *undoubtedly* qualify as cheating; or
- (2) *Suspicious* – those that *may* be deemed as cheating.

In particular, the following acts are actionable examinee behavior:

Re	Actionable Examinee Behavior
Reviewers and Other Reference Materials	<p><i>Prohibited</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening, accessing, browsing, or using of <i>digital/soft copies</i> of law-related reference materials,² at any time before, during, or after the examinations, while inside the testing room or any area within the local testing center; 2. Keeping of <i>physical/hard copies</i> of any law-related reference materials within the proximity of the examinee’s individual desk, after all other non-essential belongings should have been placed in front/outside in preparation for password deployment; 3. Bringing or possessing of any paper/s within the proximity of the examinee’s individual desk, whether blank or with printed/handwritten contents, other than the scratch paper/s officially provided by the Proctor; <p><i>Suspicious</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Any other similar way of possessing law-related reference materials within the examinee’s testing perimeter such as but not limited to crib sheets or <i>codigos</i>, written notes, codes, and symbols in one’s clothing or skin, which illustrate the intention of the examinee to deceive or gain unfair advantage in answering the Bar Examinations; <p>In all <i>prohibited</i> actionable examinee behavior cases, the examinee’s lack of knowledge or unintentional non-compliance with the rules will not be excused.</p>

² *Law-related reference materials* shall refer to all academic materials that have a logical connection to any of the subjects tested in the Bar Examinations, regardless of whether the same pertains to any or all of the Bar subjects for a given examination day or not. These include but are not limited to codals, printouts of laws, textbooks, annotated materials, digests, reviewers (whether personally made or issued by the law school or student-led Bar operations), personal notes, etc.

<i>Re</i>	Actionable Examinee Behavior
Exemplify- installed Laptop	<p><i>Prohibited</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <i>Marking</i> of submitted answers: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use of distinguishing or identifying marks; b. Failure to follow the format (font style Times New Roman and font size 14) prescribed in the <i>Exemplify</i> Manual, or the use of extraordinary formatting; c. Use of any specific name, other than those stated in the question, which may allow an examiner to recognize an examinee; d. Writing/typing of mantras, mottos, religious or spiritual prayers, dedications, special pleas, and other extraneous text in any of the textboxes provided within <i>Exemplify</i>; 6. Copying the answers of another examinee or allowing another examinee to copy their answers; 7. Use of the laptop <u>for any purpose other than</u> to access <i>Exemplify</i> (including messaging applications or any other file, program, or software); 8. Use of the LTC’s internet connection <u>for any purpose other than</u> to download questions or upload answers within <i>Exemplify</i>; 9. Bringing out the laptop to any place outside the testing room during lunch break; 10. Attempting to crack or unlock the password for an examination before password deployment; 11. Communicating the password to any person outside the testing room and while the examination time for that subject has not yet finished; <p>In all <i>prohibited</i> actionable examinee behavior cases, the examinee’s lack of knowledge or unintentional non-compliance with the rules will not be excused.</p> <p><i>Suspicious</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Handling another examinee’s laptop before and during the examinations or during lunch break; 13. Using a format other than that prescribed, <i>while</i> taking the examinations, which may suggest to a reasonable person that it was employed to flash, exhibit, or display one’s answers to an adjacent examinee; 14. Leaving any part of the Essay Editor window of <i>Exemplify</i> visible by failing to click the “Hide Exam” feature before going to the restroom; 15. Having the Essay Editor window of <i>Exemplify</i> opened before password deployment; 16. Opening of pop-up notifications and automatic web browsers from social media applications, messaging programs, etc., once the examinee connects to the LTC’s Wi-Fi;

<i>Re</i>	Actionable Examinee Behavior
<p>Other Electronic Devices</p>	<p><i>Prohibited</i></p> <p>17. Failure to surrender one’s cellular phone or watch during security/technical inspection and bringing the same into the testing room;</p> <p>In all <i>prohibited</i> actionable examinee behavior cases, the examinee’s lack of knowledge or unintentional non-compliance with the rules will not be excused.</p> <p><i>Suspicious</i></p> <p>18. Failure to surrender gadgets and other electronic devices (<i>e.g.</i>, extra batteries, chargers, etc.), which are not included in the list of allowed items, during security/technical inspection and bringing the same into the testing room;</p> <p>19. Marking, configuring, or decorating the external components of the laptop and other allowed devices in a way that raises concerns of dishonesty or is otherwise distracting to Bar personnel and other examinees;</p>
<p>Other Acts</p>	<p><i>Prohibited</i></p> <p>20. Communicating with another examinee (whether through oral, written, or non-verbal language), without the prior permission and presence of the Head Proctor, during the entire designated period for examinations;</p> <p>In all <i>prohibited</i> actionable examinee behavior cases, the examinee’s lack of knowledge or unintentional non-compliance with the rules will not be excused.</p> <p><i>Suspicious</i></p> <p>21. Refusing to remove one’s jacket or coat before going to the bathroom; and</p> <p>22. Leaving for the bathroom for an extraordinarily prolonged time or repetitive manner, and without a justifying medical or health reason, which may suggest to a reasonable person that acts of academic dishonesty are being committed.</p>

Examinees are directed to carefully review the Court’s identification of *prohibited* activities as regards the use of law-related reference materials, the *Exemplify*-installed laptop, and other devices and acts, as well as other *suspicious* behavior that may qualify as cheating. **Subject to the established protocol for reporting and investigation, these enumerated actionable examinee behavior are grounds for an examinee’s disqualification and/or imposition of disciplinary sanctions, depending on severity.**

For your information and guidance.

Reminders for the examinees –

Read all the Bar Bulletins as how you would read your Bar reviewers. The sixth one is the most important.

Know and take care of your laptop, for it is your everything during the examinations.

Be honest. There is nothing to gain, but everything to lose, with cheating.

Remember that everyone, like you, is tired. Please consider others. Good things come to those who do good things.

By this date on the next month will be the last day of your examinations. The nights shall thereafter be long as you await, probably still as sleepless and unassured as you are now, the results of your hard work. Believe that the dawn shall soon break this darkness, with *Liwayway* at first light, and finally illuminate the reason why you drew blood, broke into cold sweat, and burst into random tears.

So, again, keep your calm. Focus, then proceed.

August 24, 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. P. L. Hernando", written over a horizontal line.

RAMON PAUL L. HERNANDO

Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the Philippines
Chair, 2023 Bar Examinations