Implementing the Next Generation of the Bar Exam, 2021–2026

Building a competent, ethical, and diverse legal profession.

NCBE is developing the next generation of the bar exam, guided by the results of a comprehensive, empirical three-year study and consistent with testing industry professional standards. Implementation will be conducted in a collaborative manner, informed by input from and participation by stakeholders. This timeline provides a high-level overview of the process that will bring the new exam from concept to reality.

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Glossary of Terms

**Item Set.** A collection of test questions (items) based on a single scenario or stimulus such that the items pertaining to that scenario are developed and presented as a unit. Item sets can be developed so that all items within a set are of the same format or of different formats.

**Develop and evaluate prototypes.** Process for reviewing, critiquing, and revising early drafts of new item formats before and after pilot testing. Process for reviewing, critiquing, and revising early drafts of new item formats and related test materials as warranted (e.g., scoring rubrics). The purpose is to determine whether the item format should proceed to next stage of development and pilot testing.

**Pilot Testing.** A small-scale administration of early drafts of new item formats under semi-realistic conditions to small groups of law students and/or recently licensed practicing lawyers.

**Field Testing.** A large-scale administration of finalized new items under realistic conditions to a large and representative sample of students or recently licensed lawyers for the purpose of determining the operational feasibility of the items and format and to obtain estimates of item performance statistics.