

# **A Student's Guide to the February Arizona Bar Exam**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**(Revised September 2015)**

### **Overview**

Qualified third-year law students may take the February Arizona Bar examination when it is administered in 2016 and 2017. Those who do will receive their examination scores approximately three months after the exam, in the month of May following the February Bar exam. Provided they have otherwise been approved to become members of the Arizona Bar, including the character and fitness review, such students may begin practicing law the day they graduate from law school.

This opportunity is the result of a December 10, 2012 [order](#) of the Arizona Supreme Court authorizing, on a pilot basis, law students to take the Arizona Bar exam in February of their third year of law school and the subsequent extension of that pilot program through February 2017. We have asked the Court to authorize the February bar on a permanent basis and will let students know at the earliest opportunity if and when the Court does so.

### **Should I take the February Bar exam?**

The benefit of taking the February Bar exam is that it enables you to graduate from law school “practice ready” with your Arizona bar card in hand. Arizona is a “Uniform Bar Exam” (UBE) state. As a result, applicants passing the UBE are allowed to transfer their test scores to other UBE states, subject to the rules of that state. The list of UBE jurisdictions can be found [here](#). Test scores do not transfer to non-UBE states. The February Bar Curriculum at University of Arizona also provides students with an opportunity to take advantage of a menu of new and innovative experiential courses, externships, and clinical opportunities designed to bridge the gulf between the theory-orientation of most law school courses and law practice.

Nevertheless, the February Bar Exam is not for everyone. Due to the rigors

of studying for the exam, you will not be able to enroll in the regular 14-week courses during the spring semester of your third-year but will instead take courses offered as part of the February Bar Curriculum (see details below). This may entail passing up on courses important to your chosen area of law practice or taught by a favorite professor. The process of applying for Admission to the Bar is time-consuming and you will need to set aside some time during the fall semester to ensure you have the information needed to fill out the forms and submit the forms and fees in a timely fashion.

Students must make their own decisions as to what makes the most sense given their unique circumstances. As administrators and professors at the Law College, we stand ready to help you work through this important decision.

### **How do I apply for the Arizona February Bar Exam?**

Rule 34(b)(2) of the Rules of the Arizona Supreme Court spells out the parameters of who may be eligible to take the February Bar prior to the award of a JD degree. Please note that, in addition to the requirements discussed below, all applicants to the Arizona Bar must complete the Arizona Supreme Court course on Arizona Law (see Rule 34(j), Rules of the Arizona Supreme Court).

Under Rule 34, you may not take the February Bar unless the law school certifies you as eligible to take the February Bar. In addition to meeting the requirements of Rule 34, in order for us to certify your eligibility to sit for the Feb Bar, you must complete the following:

- 1) Take a diagnostic test, designed to assess your readiness for the bar exam. All interested students are required to take the diagnostic test. You do not need to study for this test. The test will be administered by the Law College on two dates early in the fall semester, with the results made available by mid-fall semester. You will have the opportunity to meet individually with an assigned faculty member to discuss the results and your exam options.

- 2) Submit your Arizona UBE examination application and fee to the Arizona Supreme Court by the applicable deadline. See [AzCourts.gov; Attorney Admissions](https://www.azcourts.gov/Attorney-Admissions).
- 3) Timely submit your completed Character and Fitness Report and the applicable fee.
- 4) Fill out and have Dean Jordan-Curtis sign the Early Testing Affidavit and mail it to the Arizona Supreme Court. NOTE: As you will see, in the Early Testing Affidavit, you must attest to the fact that you will have “satisfied all requirements for graduation with a Juris Doctor degree except for no more than eight (8) semester hours ...at the time of early exam administration” and you “will not be enrolled in more than two (2) credit hours” during January and February prior to your February bar exam date. It is your responsibility to ensure that this is indeed correct. We strongly encourage you to ask the Registrar to complete a degree audit for you so that you can be sure to meet these requirement.

### **If I take the February Bar exam, what will my spring semester look like?**

If you take the February bar exam, your spring semester will be broken down into two parts, the pre-bar time period and the post-bar time period. The February bar exam is usually given during the last week of February.

Pursuant to the Supreme Court’s order, students taking the February Bar are limited to taking no more than 10 units total during their 3L spring semester and no more than 2 of these 10 units during the pre-bar time period.

## **What courses can I take during the pre-Bar time period (Jan - Feb)?**

Your primary responsibility during this time will be to study for the Bar Exam. We expect all students will want to take a commercial bar preparation course and scholarships are available to students to help them do so. As stated above, you are limited to two academic credits during this approximately seven week period. To satisfy these credits, students are encouraged to take the two-unit “Bar and Professional Skills Study Course” (Pass/Fail) offered by the Law College. This course should improve your chances for success on the bar, provide a path to post-Bar experiential learning program, and give you a head start on developing the set of fundamental skills needed for success in professional practice. The emphasis in this newly designed course will focus on writing, analysis, and test-taking skills, along with practical skills training in core substantive areas.

While you may also enroll in units to satisfy journal or moot court obligations, unless you receive permission from the Dean of Students, you are not permitted to take any of the substantive classes offered at the law school during this time. Again, your job during this time is to *study*. Students who do not need the units can consider not enrolling in any units during the pre-bar time period. The Supreme Court order simply limits students to no more than 2 units during this time.

## **What courses can I take during the post-Bar Time period?**

During the post-bar time period, students will be offered a curriculum of courses with a practice-orientation designed to complete their transition from the theory-orientation of law school to the world of legal practice. Students are limited to enrolling in eight (8) units during this post-Bar time period.

In addition, students will be provided with a menu of 2-unit experiential elective courses and the opportunity to enroll in a clinic or in an externship. Students may also complete journal credits or a student-initiated substantial paper at this time. Play close attention to whether these courses are offered for graded or only on a Pass/Fail basis. Externship credits are only

Pass/Fail.

To give you a sense of the post-bar curriculum, the following are the post-bar courses offered during the spring 2016 semester:

List of February Post-Bar Courses – 2016:

Advanced Family Law Practice  
Advanced Professionalism and Law Practice  
Basic Trial Advocacy  
Civil rights Law  
Copyright Law  
Corporate Governance  
Critical Race Practice  
Elder Law  
Intellectual Property Transactional Drafting  
Intensive Legal Writing Workshop: Motions  
Jurisdiction in Indian Country  
Managing Public Lands  
Mediation  
Mergers and Acquisitions  
Negotiation of Employment Agreements  
Patent Litigation  
Practicalities of Suing Government  
Professional Skills Study Skills (Pre-February Bar course)  
Transactional Practice  
Post-February Bar Externship and Clinical Opportunities

## **Where should I go if I have any questions?**

You should feel free to contact any of the professors on the February Bar Committee below, or to contact the Registrar or the Academic Affairs Program Coordinator. Contact information is provided below:

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