

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL Los Angeles, CA

Bar Admission Information

Revision history: Formerly a part of the annually revised Student Handbook; established as a standalone policy in August 2022; name changed from “California State Bar Information” to “Bar Admission Information” in July 2024; other substantive and technical edits made in July 2024; edits made April 2025 to add a reference to the Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct.

Related policies: Graduation Requirements Policy; Student Honor Code; Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct

Scheduled Review Date: March 2026 (Academic Success and Bar Preparation Office)

A. Applying for Admission to a State Bar

1. Professional Licensure by Program

Each student who intends to seek admission to a state bar (including the District of Columbia bar) is responsible for researching, understanding, and complying with that bar’s requirements. Each student is urged to review Southwestern Law School’s [Professional Licensure by Program](#) disclosure to understand whether the J.D. program in which the student is enrolled meets the requirements to sit for the bar where the student intends to seek admission. Southwestern updates the disclosure each summer.

2. Criteria, Requirements, and Deadlines

Each state has different criteria, requirements, and deadlines for bar admission. Most but not all states require a candidate to pass a written bar examination and a character-and-fitness evaluation. Some states have additional restrictions or requirements. The National Conference of Bar Examiners, in collaboration with the American Bar Association, annually publishes a [Comprehensive Guide to Bar Admission Requirements](#) that provides information, including a directory of state bar admissions agencies, about bar admission requirements in all U.S. jurisdictions. Each student is encouraged to review this publication during their first semester and note important requirements and deadlines, some of **which may occur within 90 days of enrolling or matriculating**. For example, all

individuals who intend to practice law in California must register with the Committee of Bar Examiners within three months after commencing the study of law. Other states have similar deadlines.

3. Topics Tested

Each student should learn which subjects are tested on their state's bar examination and consider those topics when selecting courses in the elective curriculum. Students should note that many jurisdictions are in the process of changing the topics tested on their examination and the method of testing. Students are encouraged to follow their specific state's situation carefully.

4. Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE)

Virtually all states require that candidates pass the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE). The application for this examination, which may be taken before graduation, is available at <http://www.ncbex.org/exams/mpre>. Southwestern encourages students to take this examination soon after completing the Legal Profession course.

5. Costs and Commercial Bar Preparation Courses

Each student is encouraged to research the costs of applying to and sitting for the bar examination in their state of choice and develop a financial plan to cover those costs and the costs of a commercial bar preparation course. Southwestern does not endorse any specific commercial bar preparation course but strongly recommends that each graduate complete such a course. Students are welcome to consult with the Academic Success and Bar Preparation faculty to discuss different bar preparation courses, Southwestern's bar preparation curriculum and resources, and other bar preparation matters.

B. Dean's Certificates

Southwestern must provide the bar examiners in a student's selected state with an assessment of the student's character and fitness for law practice.

The Student Honor Code and Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct include standards students are expected to meet and exceed. In all dealings during law school, whether on-campus, off-campus, or online, students are also expected to conform their conduct to the Code of Professional Responsibility and meet their obligations as citizens and members of the legal profession. The school is often required to report on these matters. Students should be aware that most bar applications will require the student to report any sanctions imposed on the student by an educational institution, regardless of whether the sanctions were for conduct suggesting unfitness for legal practice.

This process also requires Southwestern to provide the board of bar examiners with portions of the student's academic file, including their original admissions application and any amendments. Students are reminded that their duty to amend their application

is ongoing and compare answers on the admissions application to answers on their bar application.

For students who plan to take the California bar examination, the Registrar's Office automatically transmits the required information to the board of bar examiners. Students who need a Dean's Certificate or similar document to sit for the bar examination in another state should submit that document to registrar@swlaw.edu with sufficient advance notice before the deadline. Please note that it can take up to seven business days to process this type of document.