



news

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Colorado adopts new bar examination for law school graduates

DENVER – The Colorado Supreme Court announced today that starting with the July 2028 administration of the bar examination, law school graduates will take the NextGen examination rather than the Uniform Bar Examination (UBE), which has been used in Colorado since 2012.

Fourteen other states so far have announced plans to adopt the NextGen exam, which was developed by the National Conference of Bar Examiners to test a broad range of foundational skills using a set of clearly identified legal concepts and principles needed in the practice of law.

“The NextGen exam furthers our goal of ensuring that new attorneys in Colorado have the knowledge and skills to meet their clients’ legal needs,” said Jessica Yates, who as Attorney Regulation Counsel for the Colorado Supreme Court oversees attorney admissions and registration. “It also helps ensure that Colorado remains part of a broad group of jurisdictions supporting lawyer mobility by offering portable bar exam scores that can be used for admission elsewhere.”

Colorado administers the UBE each February and July, and will continue to administer the UBE until it transitions to the NextGen examination in July 2028. The National Conference of Bar Examiners will no longer offer the current components of the UBE after the February 2028 exam.

The NextGen exam will cover nine “foundational concepts and principles” including civil procedure, criminal law, family law, contract law, and real property. Through use of multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions and performance tasks, it will also test seven “foundational skills” including legal research, legal writing, client counseling and advising, and negotiation and dispute resolution.

In 2018, the National Conference of Bar Examiners launched a review of the current bar exam with a focus on changes occurring in the legal profession and legal education. This review included listening sessions with more than 400 stakeholders from bar admission agencies, Supreme Courts, law schools, attorneys from across the country, and a nationwide practice analysis involving nearly 15,000 lawyers. Two committees composed of bar admission representatives, legal educators, and legal practitioners evaluated all the data obtained from these outreach efforts to provide input on what content the NextGen bar exam should test and how that content should be assessed.