

New York State Board of Law Examiners

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PRESS RELEASE

The New York State Board of Law Examiners announced today that grading has been completed for the February 2021 New York State Bar Examination. Candidates received electronic notification of their examination results today.

Due to challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the February 23-24, 2021 New York bar examination was administered remotely. Unlike the abbreviated October 2020 remote examination, the February 2021 examination included all components of the Uniform Bar Examination (UBE) and will provide candidates with a portable score that may be transferred to other UBE jurisdictions.

Overall, the Board examined a total of 2,130 candidates, including U.S. domestic-educated candidates and foreign-educated candidates, first time and repeat candidates, during the February examination. The graduates of New York law schools outperformed their counterparts from out-of-state American Bar Association approved law schools. The passing rate for the 352 graduates of the New York law schools who took the bar examination in February 2021 for the first time was 77%, which is an increase of 3% from last February, and the highest passing rate for this group in at least the last 20 years for a February exam administration. The passing rate for the 187 graduates of out-of-state ABA-approved law schools who took the bar examination for the first time was 74%, an increase of 4% from last year. The passing rate for all 539 graduates of ABA-approved law schools, including graduates of New York law schools, who took the bar examination for the first time in February 2021

is 76%, an increase of 4% from the February 2020 examination. This is the highest passing rate for this group on a February examination since 2011.

Of the 2,130 candidates who took the February 2021 bar examination, 1,054 passed for an overall passing rate of 49%, an increase of 9% from the overall passing rate of 40% on the February 2020 examination, and the highest overall passing rate for a February administration since 2013. 1,095 of the total candidates were first time takers, and 698 of those first-time takers passed for a passing rate of 64%, an increase from 61% last year. Repeat candidates also performed better on this year's examination, increasing their passing rate to 34% from 28% last year. In February, 1,035 repeat candidates, or 48% of the total number of test takers, sat for the exam.

The 857 foreign-educated candidates represented 40% of all candidates who sat for the February examination. The passing rate for all foreign-educated candidates was 43%, up from 31% last year.

There are 131 participants in this year's Pro Bono Scholars Program, and 123 of them passed the February examination for a passing rate of 94%. This innovative program permits students to sit for the bar exam in their final year of law school in return for devoting their last semester of study to performing pro bono service through an approved clinical or externship program. This affords students the opportunity to learn vital practice skills and accelerate their admission to the bar while helping those who are unable to afford legal representation.

Passing rates for various groups of candidates are presented on the chart below.

New York Bar Examination Pass Rates	February 2021
Pro Bono Scholars	94%
All ABA Graduates – First-Time Takers	76%
New York ABA Schools – First-Time Takers	77%
Out-of-State ABA Schools – First-Time Takers	74%
Foreign-Educated – First-Time Takers	52%
All First Time-Takers	64%
All ABA Graduates (first-time takers & repeaters)	54%
All Foreign-Educated (first-time takers & repeaters)	43%
All Candidates (first-time takers & repeaters)	49%
All Repeaters	34%

A list of candidates passing the February 2021 bar examination will be published on the Board's website at www.nybarexam.org on Thursday, April 22, 2021. Successful candidates, who also have completed the New York Law Course and taken and passed both the New York Law Exam and the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination as required by the Rules of the New York State Court of Appeals, will be certified by the Board to the Appellate Division for admission to the bar. Candidates must then appear before the Committee on Character and Fitness before being admitted to the bar.

The Board congratulates the candidates who were successful on the February 2021 bar examination.