

The Supreme Court
State of Washington

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Washington State Bar Association
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Terra Nevitt, Interim Executive Director
Washington State Bar Association
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Jean McElroy, Chief Regulatory Counsel
Washington State Bar Association
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Re: 2020 Bar Exams

Dear President Majumdar, Ms. Nevitt, and Ms. McElroy:

The Washington Supreme Court recognizes that the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted many of the regular functions of the law schools in Washington and of the Washington State Bar Association's (WSBA) regulatory functions.

The Court has inherent authority over the admission and licensing to practice law in Washington and over the WSBA's administration of those functions. Administering the Bar exam is an essential function of the Court and the WSBA, and this letter outlines shared expectations for the safe administration of Bar exams in July and September, 2020.

- The Bar exam will be administered twice, on July 28 and 29, 2020 and on September 9 and 10, 2020, in both the Seattle/Tacoma/Everett area and the Spokane area, in multiple separate test administration sites as determined and arranged by the WSBA.
- Those applicants who have filed an application to take the July 2020 Bar exam under existing deadlines will be permitted to take the exam in either July or September 2020. In addition, applicants who, within the selection timeline to be established by WSBA admissions staff, choose to transfer to the February 2021 exam administration or to withdraw their application completely, will be permitted to do so without additional application fees (for transferring) or will be offered a full refund of the application fee (for withdrawal);

- All testing sites for both the July and the September exam administrations will be administered in strict compliance with then-existing State and local public health guidelines, including with respect to social distancing and proper ventilation/airflow;
- WSBA admissions staff may impose reasonable requirements on applicants, staff and proctors, in order to comply with public health guidelines and social distancing requirements, which may include but are not limited to:
 - Requiring the use of face masks and/or gloves, and compliance with physical distancing requirements, while in the exam testing location;
 - Requiring applicants, staff, and proctors to answer questions about and/or certify to current information about their health, exposure to Covid-19, and recent travel, consistent with public health guidelines;
 - Requiring applicants, staff, and proctors to acknowledge that they will not be admitted to, or will be required to leave, the testing area if they display symptoms of illness or fail to comply with requirements;
 - Requiring staggered arrival, registration, and starting and ending times for exam sessions; and
 - Other conditions or requirements that appear necessary to achieve and maintain a safe administration of the exam.

The court may approve additional modifications to court rules and exam procedures as deemed necessary for the safe administration of the Bar exam in July and September, 2020.

Sincerely,



Debra L. Stephens
Chief Justice
Washington State Supreme Court