

Info about Bar Exam Preparation for Family, Loved Ones, and Friends Frequently Asked Questions

A note to friends, family, and other loved ones: your law graduate is studying for what many lawyers regard as the single most important and challenging examination of their career. We hope these frequently asked questions and answers will help you help and support them as they prepare!

What is the bar exam?

- The bar exam is the test all aspiring attorneys must take to become licensed attorneys.
- It is only offered twice a year: in February and July.

How will my law graduate prepare for this exam?

- Law graduates take an extensive bar preparation course and commit to at least 10-12 weeks of full-time study before date of bar exam.
- Graduates should treat studying as a full-time job and devote 45-50 hours a week to serious studying during the weeks leading up to the exam.
- Graduates should create a regular and consistent schedule that includes adequate time to sleep, but they should not try to hold down a job or travel.

Wait — this is just another test, and my law graduate is great at taking tests. Also, they just spent three years studying law already. Why is this so stressful and time-consuming?

- For those of us who aren't lawyers, it's hard to understand why studying for the bar exam requires such a big commitment.
- After all, we know how smart our law graduate is and how hard they've worked during law school. It seems like they should definitely pass without too much effort, even if they take some time off to relax and socialize.
- But the exam is uniquely stressful because of its combination of high stakes, financial burden, and vast coverage.
- This is a high-stakes exam only administered twice a year.
- Because graduates need to study full-time rather than earning income in the weeks before the exam, they may face financial burdens. Graduates also pay for a bar preparation class (average costs run from \$2,000-\$5,000).
- The exam is a rigorous two-day test covering a vast amount of substantive material.
- Test-takers must prepare for numerous topics and will not know ahead of time which topics will be tested on a given exam.
- Many graduates' employment is contingent upon passage.

How can I support my law graduate while they are studying for the bar exam?

- Ask them if they have specific requests (some seek accountability and to like be asked “what did you do today? What will you do tomorrow?” and for others this feels like unnecessary pressure and would rather not discuss their study at all).
- Take over routine household tasks and other responsibilities.
- Encourage and enable a routine study schedule and protect your loved one from any interruptions.
- Understand they must prioritize study and minimize other obligations. They will need to skip normal social or family engagements during this time. Be patient if they are slower than usual to respond to your calls or texts.

What else should I know?

- Your loved one may be so focused on this exam during this time that they may not even seem like themselves.
- However, with your support, this difficult time will pass quickly and you can look forward to celebrating with your graduate when they have cleared this last hurdle.