

Policy regarding certification for the early bar exam (effective academic year 2024-2025 and forward)

Application for Certification

Students wishing to take any bar exam before graduating must apply for and obtain the Law School's certification to sit for the exam. Students may only apply for certification if (1) they will have satisfied all degree requirements by the end of the fall semester of their final year, except that the student may be up to 10 credits short of the credits required for graduation and the student may need up to 6 of the required experiential credits; (2) they have already taken and passed the MPRE¹; and (3) they will take no more than 10 credits in their final semester of law school. Students will be expected to earn these up-to 10 credits via the prescribed curriculum, below.

Application Process

Applications to sit for a bar exam before graduating must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs by September 15 during the student's final year of study. The application form will require the following information:

- An updated transcript;
- The courses in which the student has enrolled for their fall final semester, showing that all graduation requirements other than the credit requirement will have been met by the end of the fall semester;
- Confirmation of the number of spring-semester credits needed for graduation, not to exceed 10, and that the student has carefully checked to ensure that the number is correct;
- Confirmation that the student has passed the MPRE or has taken the MPRE in August and is awaiting the results;²
- Confirmation that the student has met with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and a career advisor to discuss the prospect of taking the February bar;
- Information about the commercial bar preparation course the student has registered for (or plans for doing so);
 - If a student does not intend to register for a commercial bar preparation course, the student must submit a detailed and specific plan explaining how they will prepare for the bar exam in the absence of such a course;
- A statement describing what efforts have been made to secure a post-bar exam placement (see curriculum below). If offers of a placement opportunity have been received and/or accepted, please include those details as well as contact information for the potential supervisor;
- Any additional information that may be relevant to the matter.

Certification Decision

Each application will be reviewed by a committee appointed by the Dean. The certification decision will be based on a review of the student's entire application to determine whether the student is prepared, academically and otherwise, to take and pass the bar exam in February of their final year. If additional information is needed, an individual meeting with the student may be required.

Students will be informed of the certification decision by October 1. Certification may be conditioned on the student's MPRE passage if a score was not available at the time of decision; on securing a post-bar exam placement; on modification of the student's participation in journal or

¹ A student who took the August MPRE and is still waiting for score results may apply and update their application with MPRE results as soon as those results become available (usually mid-September).

² The student must update the application with MPRE results as soon as they are available.

other activities during January and February; or on other requirements. The certification decision is at the Law School's full discretion and is final and not appealable. Students may not register for the February bar exam during their final year without certification from the Law School.

Students who have been certified by the Law School must confirm by November 1 that they intend to register for the February bar exam. Students must confirm, by end of the first week of January, their post-bar exam placement in order to be certified – failure to secure a placement will disqualify the student from being certified. A confirmation form will be provided to all students receiving a positive certification decision.

Final Spring Curriculum for February Bar Takers

To provide the student adequate time and resources to successfully prepare for and take the bar exam in February of their final year, the student will be required to take the following courses.

- An internal bar review course—either a 2-credit Independent Study or a 2-credit Special Topics in Bar Review course to be taught by the Director of the Academic Skills Program or his/her designee
 - This course will involve meeting with the Professor to discuss bar topics and writing several bar exam essays for review by the Professor (to meet or exceed the usual word requirement associated with independent studies). Students must successfully complete all required practice essays and attend all scheduled meetings with the Professor to pass this course.
 - For logistical purposes, the decision of whether to offer an independent study vs. a Special Topics class will be made on or around October 1 (after the number of early bar takers is known) to provide sufficient time for the Dean's Office to arrange this class and for students to register.
- Externship: Post-Bar (up to 8 credits) supervised by Director of Externships
 - Students will be required to secure their own post-bar exam externship placement, although they may work with the Director to brainstorm possibilities.
 - In each of the final 9 weeks of the semester, students will be expected to work approximately 4.7 hours/credit. For an 8-credit externship, this would mean approximately 37.5 hours/week. (While this is a full-time work schedule, students should have adequate time to complete this work as they will not be enrolled in any other classes during the placement period.
 - Students will be required to submit journal reflections and other assignments to the Director to meet the typical requirements associated with an Externship Placement but will not be required to attend a classroom portion.
 - Students who do not secure a post-bar exam placement by the end of the first week in January will not be certified to take the February bar and should instead register for other courses for spring.