

Computer Based Testing Information



The Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners

Please read this informational brochure carefully!

DO NOT bring this brochure with you to the examination room.

You will be provided with all necessary instructions at the examination.

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CBT BASIC PROCEDURES

1. Read the Frequently Asked Questions portion of this document to ensure you have a good understanding of the computer-based testing (CBT) procedures.
2. Ensure that you have access to a dependable laptop which meets the minimum requirements as discussed in the *Laptop and Technical Questions* section of the *Frequently Asked Questions*.
3. Indicate on your bar application to sit for the Pennsylvania Bar Examination that you wish to use CBT for the Performance Test (PT)/Essay portions of the examination. A non-refundable/non-transferable user fee must be paid once you select this option.
 - a. This fee will be calculated for you if you use the board's Fee Calculator.
4. Approximately six weeks prior to the examination, you will receive an email with specific instructions regarding downloading the SofTest software. Once you have downloaded and installed the software, you will need to register the software by taking the "Mock exam".
 - a. You will NOT be able to test with your laptop computer if you do not successfully download and register the software PRIOR to the date of the exam.
5. Once the initial download process is complete, you will download secure examination answer files.
 - a. These files are password protected. You cannot open them until the PT/Essay day (Tuesday) of the bar examination.
 - b. Please contact ExamSoft at 866-429-8889 if you have any questions or problems with the downloading of your examination answer files.
6. Complete the Mock Exam once, and take the "Practice Exam" several times to test your laptop computer. The upload process in the Mock Exam will familiarize you with the proper procedures.
7. Your computer will automatically reboot when you exit both the morning and afternoon examination sessions. When it has rebooted, you will be prompted to upload your answer files to the secure web server. You will NOT be allowed to upload your answer files until the examination has ended at 4:30 p.m.
8. Following the completion of the examination on Tuesday, you will be required to log onto a web site and upload your examination answer files. Instructions for uploading your answer files to the website, will be provided when you leave the examination site.

NOTE: Your PT/Essay answers MUST be uploaded by 11:00 p.m. on the PT/essay day of the bar examination (Tuesday). Answers not uploaded by the deadline will not be graded. Applicants who took the examination but did not upload an answer file will receive grades of zero(0) for those answers.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT EXAMSOFT AND THE SOFTWARE

Who is ExamSoft?

ExamSoft Worldwide, Inc. is a software developer specializing in computerized assessment and assessment administration programs. The Board of Law Examiners contracts with this vendor to provide technology in administering CBT.

What is SofTest™?

SofTest is a high stakes assessment program developed and licensed by ExamSoft that enables applicants to securely take examinations downloaded to their own laptop computers by blocking access to files, programs and the Internet during the bar exam.

How reliable is SofTest?

Over 2,000,000 exams have been successfully administered using SofTest. SofTest is used by 19 State Supreme Courts for delivery of the Bar and Legal Specialization exams and at over 120 colleges and universities. SofTest has several safety features to ensure that answers entered are not lost.

What is FlexSite?

FlexSite is ExamSoft's Internet-based exam delivery option. Using SofTest, you will download your exam files prior to the day of the examination, and upload your answers after the examination via the Internet. You WILL NOT require Internet connectivity during the examination. You WILL require Internet connectivity to download your exam files and upload your answers.

LAPTOP AND TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

What are the minimum system requirements for using SofTest and FlexSite?

SofTest may be used on any computer running the Windows operating system. This INCLUDES Macintosh computers running the "Boot Camp" software. It may not be used with PC emulation software. The minimum recommended system requirements are:

- Have a laptop computer meeting the following minimum requirements
 - PC architecture/framework
 - CPU = 1 GHz Pentium III or Industry Equivalent
 - RAM = 1 GB
 - Drives = 50 MB of free space
 - Must have a working internal battery
 - Operating System = English 32-bit Versions of Windows XP, 32-bit and 64-bit Versions of Windows Vista and Windows 7. SofTest cannot be used in virtual operating systems.
 - **NOTE:** Ensure that the date and time are accurate on your laptop!
 - Software = Internet Browser
 - Internet Connection: Internet Access for SofTest Installation, Exam Download and Upload (AOL Users must have AOL 6.0 or higher)
 - **NOTE:** You must have an Ethernet or wireless Internet connection on your laptop.
 - Screen Resolution: 1024 x 768 or higher

May I use my Macintosh laptop with the software?

You may use a Macintosh laptop with the SofTest software, provided it is running a version of Windows. Users with Apple's Mac OS X Leopard (v. 10.5) or Mac OS X Snow Leopard (v. 10.6) laptops can run SofTest in Windows XP, Vista or 7 installed via Apple's Boot Camp. Specific details on how to install Windows on a Macintosh laptop should be sought from the vendor or manufacturer of the laptop.

Does it matter what type of laptop I use?

The specific model or make of your laptop does not have a direct impact, provided you meet the minimum system requirements (listed directly above). It is imperative that you make sure you are using a dependable laptop, and that you test the software on the laptop several times prior to examination day.

Do I need a floppy disk or other external media drive?

You do **NOT** need a floppy drive to take CBT. The FlexSite method employed by the Board of Law Examiners ensures that you have both a primary copy of your exam file, and multiple reliable backup copies on your hard drive. Therefore, a floppy disk drive, or any other external media drive (CDRW drive, flash drive, zip drive, etc.) is not required.

Can I use more than one laptop for the examination (a backup laptop scenario)?

You can use *ONLY* one laptop for CBT. This laptop will be the one you must bring with you to the examination site on the day of the examination. If you have followed all of the registration steps in the "Registration Checklist for Laptop Users" properly, your laptop should function adequately for the examination. Therefore, no backup laptop would be necessary. If you have problems downloading software prior to the examination, contact ExamSoft at: 866-429-8889.

Where can I get further advanced technical information on the hardware requirements and software?

ExamSoft offers further advanced technical support answers on their web site at the following location:

<http://www.examssoft.com/generic/frame.asp?faqapp>

This page answers many more advanced computer and software setup questions, such as:

1. How to install SofTest for use with more than one jurisdiction.
2. Common errors which happen during the examination and trouble-shooting.
3. Downloading software while a firewall is running on your laptop.
4. Having administrator rights for your user account on your laptop.

SIGNING UP AND REGISTERING FOR CBT

What is the SofTest registration process?

The Registration Process records you as an applicant who has been properly enrolled to take their essay examination on computer *and* provides you a copy of SofTest to install on your computer. It confirms you have downloaded and installed SofTest, registered your copy of SofTest and downloaded your exam(s) so you may use your computer on examination day. This process can *ONLY* be completed on one computer, so make sure you have a reliable laptop ready before downloading any software.

How do I sign up and register?

You must notify the board office that you intend to take the PT/essay examination on a laptop. You must choose a CBT site when completing the online application to receive the registration and download procedures and instructions. Registration instructions will then be emailed to the address you provided on your bar examination application.

What email address will the notice for software download and registration be sent to?

The email address used for all examination related notices will be the email address you provided when you filed your bar examination application. Make sure it is an email address that you will have continuous access to until results are release.

When will I receive email notice that I can download and register the software?

You will receive notice approximately six weeks before the examination date.

What happens if I do not receive the email regarding the software download and registration?

The board office will send out email notices to all applicants who have signed up to use CBT and who have not yet downloaded the software. These email notices will be sent once a week starting six weeks before the examination, until the date of the examination. If you do not receive any of these emails, check the following:

1. Ask your email service provider if they are blocking SPAM.
2. If you are using email client software, such as Outlook or Outlook Express, make sure you do not have a SPAM blocker enabled. If you do, you can add the following email address to the list of allowable email addresses:
 - pabaroffice@pabarexam.org
3. Ensure that you have provided the board office with a valid email address.
4. If you have not received your email notice by the time you receive your admission ticket for the examination (sent out approximately three weeks before the examination), contact the board office for your user ID and password information.

How can I check to make sure I have registered successfully?

Once you register SofTest, you will be advised on-screen and via email that you have done so successfully. You may also access your registration status online at <http://www.examssoft.com/pabar>.

Can I still sign up for CBT after I have filed my bar application for the examination?

Seating limitations may apply at some examination sites which would prevent late registrations such as these. Guaranteed CBT use is only provided when you register during the initial filing of your bar examination application.

Do I have to register before the day of the examination?

Yes. If you have not registered prior to the Wednesday the week before the examination, you will be required to handwrite your answers for the entire essay portion of the examination. **Your CBT fee will not be refunded.**

Will my law school version of SofTest work for this examination?

No. You will need to download the Bar Edition of SofTest to use your laptop for the PT/essay portion of the examination.

PRE-EXAMINATION TESTING QUESTIONS

What is the Mock Exam?

The Mock Exam confirms your laptop is compatible with SofTest and enables users to familiarize themselves with how to open, write and upload answer files *prior* to the day of the examination. The Mock Exam **must** be completed to ensure your computer has been configured properly for use on the day of the examination. Failure to do so may require you to handwrite your exam(s).

How do I get a copy of the Mock Exam?

One copy of the Mock Exam will be automatically downloaded after you have registered your copy of SofTest. You will receive an email confirmation when the download has occurred along with instructions on how to complete the Mock Exam.

How will I know if my Mock Exam answer file was returned?

A visual 'progress status' (blue bar) is displayed as the upload takes place. When the upload is complete, a 'success' message is displayed. An email confirmation is then sent to your email address.

May I practice with the software?

Yes. There are two options. We **STRONGLY** urge you to take advantage of both.

Internet Delivered Mock Exam – Additional copies of the Mock Exam are available to familiarize you with SofTest. Internet connectivity is *only* required to download an additional copy of the exam file and upload the answer file. **NO** Internet connectivity is required while taking the exam. Instructions for downloading additional copies of the Mock Exam, taking it and uploading the answer file may be found at <http://www.examsoft.com/fsei>

Practice Exam Built into SofTest - After registering **SofTest**, launch the program by double-clicking the **SofTest** icon on your Windows Desktop and then click 'Launch SofTest.' When **SofTest** opens click the "Practice Exam" button (see **Figure 1**).

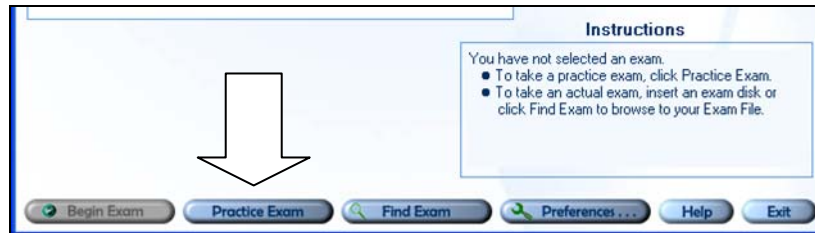


Figure 1

The "Practice Exam" allows you to familiarize yourself with the **SofTest** exam environment and word processing features. The Practice Exam *cannot* be saved and *no answer file* will be uploaded. You may use this Practice Exam as many times as you wish.

Can I have my computer checked prior to the bar examination?

No, the Board of Law Examiners will not provide a tech support session. It is your responsibility to contact ExamSoft with any technical problems.

EXAMINATION DAY PROCEDURES

Will technical help be available on the day of the examination?

Very Limited. Limited technical support will be available *ONLY* for exiting of the software on the day of the examination. ExamSoft provided technicians will be available to help with these issues, but they will not help with installing the software, registering your computer, or the start-up procedure at the beginning exam. It is your responsibility to ensure your laptop is in working order *PRIOR* to the examination.

What if I have not successfully downloaded the software and exam files by the examination date?

You will *NOT* be able to test with your laptop computer if you do not successfully download and register the software *PRIOR* to the date of the exam. You will be required to handwrite the exam. Proctors will issue the appropriate answer books. You will remain in your assigned seat and section.

Will the essay questions appear on my screen at the time of the examination?

No. All essay examination questions are provided in a paper booklet, which is distributed to each applicant (CBT and handwriters) by proctors on the day of the examination. They will not be included in your downloaded examination answer files.

Can I take the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) on my laptop?

No. The MBE is a national test and is only available in paper format.

Can I take my laptop out of the testing room over the lunch break?

No. Your laptop must remain in the testing area the entire length of the examination (from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.). If you should finish the exam early, you may leave the area, but your laptop must remain until the completion of the exam. You must return to the testing area after the examination has finished at 4:30 p.m.

POST-EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Will there be Internet connectivity at the test site?

No. It is your responsibility to find an Internet connection (hotel, Internet Café's, wireless hotspots, etc.) and upload your answer files by the designated time (11 p.m., Tuesday).

When do I have to upload my examination answers?

You will have until **11:00 p.m.** on Tuesday to upload your answer files.

How long does this upload take?

The upload process should take only a few minutes depending on your Internet connection speed, and your computer.

Should I call the board office after the examination to check on the printing of my answers?

No. A board staff member will contact you either by phone or email if a problem with your upload and/or printing has occurred.

How will I know my answer files have been uploaded?

A visual 'progress status' (blue bar) is displayed as the upload takes place. When the upload is complete, a 'success' message is displayed. Two separate email confirmations (AM and PM) are sent to the email address provided when you signed up on ExamSoft's website.

What if I have problems or questions with the software or uploading?

Begin by visiting ExamSoft's Frequently Asked Questions web page located at www.examssoft.com/barfaq. Technical support from ExamSoft will also be available to you via email at support@examssoft.com or by phone toll-free at 866-429-8889.

REGISTRATION CHECKLIST FOR LAPTOP USERS

The following checklist is provided as a convenience for applicants to ensure they have met the adequate requirements for CBT. The items on this checklist must be completed prior to the date of the bar examination if you wish to use your laptop for CBT.

- Obtain a Fully Qualified Laptop** – Ensure that you have access to a fully qualified laptop as defined in the *Laptop and Technical Questions* section of the *Frequently Asked Questions* ([Page 2](#)). You must be able to have access to this laptop until results are released for the examination. You will only be allowed to download the software to this one laptop. For this reason, please make sure your computer is in optimum operating condition before arriving at the examination. The following procedures will help to prevent common examination day problems:
 - Disable all screensavers and power saving features
 - Ensure that the date and time are correct on your laptop
 - Test your laptop with the SofTest Practice and Mock Exams as much as possible PRIOR to arriving at the examination site.
- Sign Up For CBT With The Board Office** – During the filing of your application to sit for the Pennsylvania Bar Examination, you must indicate that you wish to take the PT/essay portion of the examination on laptop. After your application is submitted, you will receive email notification approximately six weeks before the examination with further instructions.
- Register** – Once you have received your email confirmation, visit www.examsoft.com/pabar, and click the Exam Takers Tab. Use your applicant ID number and password (the last 4 digits of your social security number) from the email to log into the site.
- Install** – Read the instructions on the screen to download and install SofTest on your laptop.
- Complete Registration** – Enter your applicant ID number and password into SofTest when prompted to register.
- Download Exam(s)** – Formatted exam files for recording your answer are automatically downloaded after successfully registering SofTest.
- Take Mock Exam** - Complete the Mock Exam and upload the answer file
- Review FlexSite Exam Information** – Upon completion of SofTest registration you will be provided information about using your laptop on the day of the examination.
- Equipment** - You will be required to access the Internet following the examination to upload your answers. Make certain your computer is properly equipped.

NOTE: Following the end of the PT/essay examination, you will be required to upload your two answer files to a secure server.

These procedures must be completed each time you sit for the bar examination, regardless of any previous ExamSoft registrations you may have completed for this bar examination or any other examination.

Applicants who have not registered SofTest and downloaded their exam files will not be allowed to use their laptop computer for that examination and will be required to handwrite their answers.

INFORMATIVE PROMPTS FOR AM SESSION OF ESSAY EXAMINATION

The following prompts will be displayed after you open your AM answer file and reboot your system on the day of the examination.

Notice 1

I understand that I am not required to use a computer to take this examination and that I may handwrite my answers. In NO EVENT will I hold the Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners or ExamSoft Worldwide Inc., their partners, staff, employees, officers, directors, or affiliates liable to me for any and all damages arising from the use of this software, including any loss of my examination answers or any effect it may have on my examination score. I understand that I have a duty to ensure my computer is in proper working condition before the examination and that I followed all installation instructions.

I accept the foregoing by clicking OK at the bottom of this screen

Notice 2

SofTest will save and back up your work EVERY minute. SofTest will BLOCK access to all other applications on your computer. SofTest will AUTOMATICALLY format all margins, line spacing, appropriate headings and page numbers. Your examination questions are printed in the booklet you received from the examination proctor – you WILL NOT see the examination questions on the SofTest screen. Use the arrow keys at the top of the SofTest screen to navigate through the examination questions.

Notice 3

The ExamSoft file you are using has been formatted for a total of three (3) questions, the Performance Test (PT) and essay questions #1 and #2. Please answer each question and all its corresponding parts in the appropriately numbered SofTest window. Use the arrow keys to navigate among the SofTest question windows.

Notice 4

DO NOT TURN OFF your computer without an ExamSoft Site Engineer present. If your computer malfunctions, place it in the top corner of your table area and leave the power on. Notify a proctor immediately, and you will be provided answer books to handwrite the remainder of the PT/essay examination. Your answers will be collected by a technician following the completion of the session. Your work should be safely stored in an encrypted format on your computer's hard drive.

Notice 5

When you have completed the PT and AM essay questions, you will be required to reboot your system. After your computer has rebooted, you will see a prompt to upload your examination answer files. You may NOT upload your answer files until after the examination.

DO NOT reformat your computer's hard drive until after results are released.

INFORMATIVE PROMPTS FOR PM SESSION OF ESSAY EXAMINATION

The following prompts will be displayed after you open your PM answer file and reboot your system on the day of the examination.

Notice 1

I understand that I am not required to use a computer to take this examination and that I may handwrite my answers. In NO EVENT will I hold the Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners or ExamSoft Worldwide Inc., their partners, staff, employees, officers, directors, or affiliates liable to me for any and all damages arising from the use of this software, including any loss of my examination answers or any effect it may have on my examination score. I understand that I have a duty to ensure my computer is in proper working condition before the examination and that I followed all installation instructions.

I accept the foregoing by clicking OK at the bottom of this screen

Notice 2

SofTest will save and back up your work EVERY minute. SofTest will BLOCK access to all other applications on your computer. SofTest will AUTOMATICALLY format all margins, line spacing, appropriate headings and page numbers. Your examination questions are printed in the booklet you received from the examination proctor – you WILL NOT see the examination questions on the SofTest screen. Use the arrow keys at the top of the SofTest screen to navigate through the examination questions.

Notice 3

The ExamSoft file you are using has been formatted for a total of four (4) essay questions, essay questions #3, #4, #5 and #6. Please answer each question and all its corresponding parts in the appropriately numbered SofTest window. Use the arrow keys to navigate among the SofTest question windows.

Notice 4

DO NOT TURN OFF your computer without an ExamSoft Site Engineer present. If your computer malfunctions, place it in the top corner of your table area and leave the power on. Notify a proctor immediately, and you will be provided answer books to handwrite the remainder of the PT/essay examination. Your answers will be collected by a technician following the completion of the session. Your work should be safely stored in an encrypted format on your computer's hard drive.

Notice 5

When you have completed the PM essay questions, you will be required to reboot your system. After your computer has rebooted, you will see a prompt to upload your examination answer files. You may NOT upload your answer files until after the examination.

DO NOT reformat your computer's hard drive until after results are released.