

State by State Bar Admission Requirements

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Summary: Learn what the bar admission requirements are in every state and territory of the United States.

There is more involved to becoming a lawyer eligible to practice law in a given state than simply passing the bar exam. Each state has its own unique set of rules that govern bar admission. These rules relate to everything from education and residency requirements to "character and fitness" determinations. The following chart covers the basics about what is required for bar admission in various states (besides passing the bar exam). We encourage you to review the following articles to find out more detailed information about state bar exam components and requirements as well as standards on reciprocity and admission on motion:

- [A Comprehensive Guide to Bar Reciprocity: What States Have Reciprocity for Lawyers and Allow You to Walk into the Bar](#)
- ["Waive" Goodbye to Taking Another Bar Exam: Typical Requirements and Tips to Effectively Manage the Waiver Process](#)
- [The Different Policies of Various State Bar Associations Regarding the Transfer of MBE Scores from One Jurisdiction to Another](#)

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

State	Must Be U.S. Resident	Character & Fitness Evaluation	Felony Conviction Precludes Admission[i]	Allows Conditional Admission[ii]	Prelegal Education Requirement[iii]	Must Have Law Degree from ABA-Approved School[iv]	Other Study Needed[v]	Felony Waiver[vi]
Alabama		X	X (unless granted full pardon with civil rights restoration)		X		X	
Alaska		X					X	
Arizona		X		X			X	
Arkansas	X	X				X	X	
Calif.		X			X			
Colorado		X					X	
Conn.	X	X		X				
Delaware		X			X	X	X	
D.C.		X					X	
Florida		X	X (unless civil rights restored)	X			X	
Georgia		X	X (unless pardoned or civil rights restored)		X		X	
Hawaii		X					X	

Idaho		X		X		X	X	
Illinois		X		X	X		X	
Indiana		X		X		X	X	
Iowa		X				X		
Kansas		X	X (until 5 years after completion of sentence)		X	X		
Kentucky		X		X				
Louisiana		X		X				
Maine		X		X	X			
Maryland		X			X		X	
Mass.		X			X		X	
Michigan		X			X			
Minn.		X		X				
Miss.		X	X (with exceptions for certain felony crimes)		X	X		
Missouri		X	X (until 5 years after completion of sentence)				X	
Montana		X		X		X	X	
Nebraska		X		X	X	X		
Nevada		X		X	X		X	
New Hamp.	X	X			X		X	
New Jersey		X		X		X	X	
New Mexico		X		X			X	
New York		X					X	
North Carolina		X			X		X	
North Dakota		X		X	X	X		
Ohio		X			X		X	
Okla.		X			X	X		
Oregon		X	X (if conviction would lead to disbarment)	X			X	
Penn.		X			X		X	
Rhode Island	X	X		X			X	

South Carolina		X				X	X	
South Dakota		X		X		X		
Tenn.		X		X	X			
Texas		X	X (until 5 years after completion of sentence)	X			X	
Utah		X					X	
Vermont		X			X		X	
Virginia		X						
Wash.		X					X	
West Virginia		X		X	X		X	
Wisconsin		X		X				
Wyoming		X		X		X	X	
Guam		X		X	X	X		
Northern Mariana Islands		X	X (unless granted full pardon)		X	X		
Palau		X	X (unless granted full pardon)					
Puerto Rico		X		X	X			
Virgin Islands		X			X			

[i] A felony conviction constitutes a rebuttable presumption or prima facie evidence of lack of good moral character in Connecticut and Indiana. In Montana, an applicant with a felony conviction is presumed to lack good moral character until completion of sentence. In Illinois, felons must receive character & fitness certification prior to [taking the bar exam](#). In Ohio, convicted felons must meet specific conditions.

[ii] Conditional admission includes conditional admission in cases of substance abuse (Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam); mental disability (Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam); debt (Arizona, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam); and criminal history (Arizona, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin, Guam). Maine and Puerto Rico have no set categories for conditional admission. Certain states have abeyance and/or deferral rules in cases of applicants with certain kinds of character issues.

[iii] Prelegal education requirements include having a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university, completing two years of school, or having completed a certain portion of work required for a Bachelor's Degree.

[iv] Graduates from certain non-ABA-approved law schools can take the bar exam in Alaska, Arizona Colorado, Hawaii, Missouri, and New Mexico if they have been practicing for a certain period of time in another jurisdiction. Other states have other eligibility requirements for students coming from non-ABA-approved law schools. States do not require a degree from an ABA-approved law school allow other means of legal study to permit taking the bar exam, including attending non-ABA-approved law schools, law office study, correspondence law school, online law school, being admitted in another state or having a foreign law degree.

[v] Some states require additional courses or study prior to admission and some require additional study after admission. For example, online or in person courses on state law are required prior to admission in Alabama, Arizona and New Mexico. Prior to admission, applicants in Colorado must complete the state Supreme Court's mandatory course on professionalism, applicants in Delaware must complete a 5-month clerkship and pre-admission session and applicants in South Carolina must complete a bridge-the-gap program. Examples of post-admission requirements are mandatory courses on professional conduct and local practice in the District of Columbia, completion of 10 continuing education credits within the first year of admission in Idaho, completion of mandatory new lawyer training program within the first year of admission in Nevada, and completion of a bridge-the-gap seminar within one year of admission in West Virginia.

[vi] Bar examination fees differ depending on whether the applicant is a law student, first-time non-attorney taker, attorney taker, repeat taker, taker with a laptop, or attorney-exam taker. First-time bar taker fees range from \$150 (North Dakota) to \$1,140 (highest range in Texas). Laptop fees range from \$0 (Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Northern Mariana Islands) to \$133.50 (Hawaii).

Source: www.ncbex.org/pubs/bar-admissions-guide/2016/index.html