

COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS CLOSED SESSION AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM: January 2017 – C-202

DATE: January 11, 2017

TO: Subcommittee on Examinations

FROM: Lisa Cummins, Director for Examinations

SUBJECT: **Technical Report on the June 2016 First-Year Law Students’ Examination**

BACKGROUND

After results from the First-Year Law Students’ Examination are released, the Committee of Bar Examiners’ (Committee) psychometric consultant prepares a technical report on the examination.

DISCUSSION

Attached is the report prepared by Roger Bolus, Ph.D., on the June 2016 administration of the First-Year Law Students’ Examination.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the technical report be received and filed.

PROPOSED MOTION:

Should the Subcommittee agree with this recommendation, the following motion is suggested:

Move that the technical report on the June 2016 First-Year Law Students’ Examination dated August 15, 2016, which was prepared by Roger Bolus, Ph.D., be received and filed.

TECHNICAL REPORT ON THE JUNE 2016 FIRST YEAR LAW STUDENTS' EXAMINATION

Roger Bolus, Ph.D.

August 15, 2016

The First-Year Law Students' Examination has two parts, multiple-choice and essay. The multiple-choice section consists of 100 items dealing with Contracts, Criminal Law, and Torts. Multiple-choice raw scores (i.e., number of items answered correctly) were equated to the June 1998, 2011, and October 2013 exams using 21 items that were common to each of these exams. The equating formula was as follows:

$$\text{Multiple Choice Scale} = (3.4092 \times \text{raw multiple-choice score}) + 21.6267$$

The essay section consisted of four questions in the same subjects as the multiple-choice test. Scores were assigned to answers on a 40 to 100 point scale in 5-point intervals. The candidates' raw total essay scores were scaled to a score distribution that had the same mean and standard deviation as their multiple choice scores using the following formula:

$$\text{Essay Scale} = (2.3536 \times \text{raw essay total score}) + -442.389$$

A candidate's total scale score was the sum of that candidate's multiple choice and essay scale scores. Candidates with total scores of 560 or higher pass and those with scores below 540 fail. Candidates in the 540 to 559.9999 range have their essay answers and all their scores reviewed by a member of the Committee's Examination Development and Grading Team.

Of the 488 candidates who took the exam, 57 had total scale scores of 560 or greater and 388 had total scale scores that were below 540. The latter count includes 4 failing candidates who did not complete the exam. Of the 43 candidates in the reappraisal range, 32 passed. The total number passing (89) was 18% of the total number of takers. The table below summarizes the main test statistics for the multiple-choice, essay, and total scores for the 484 applicants completing the exam. There was a 0.60 correlation between their essay and multiple-choice scores.

Score	Raw Scores		Scale Scores		Score
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Reliability
Multiple-Choice	60.86	14.65	229.09	49.95	0.88
Essay ¹	285.3	21.22	229.09	49.95	0.64
Total			458.19	89.4	0.85

The mean raw scores on the Contracts, Criminal Law, and Torts sections of the multiple choice test were 22.65, 17.88, and 20.33. The corresponding standard deviations were 6.26, 4.98, and 4.76.

¹ A score of 100 was given to all students on Essay Question 3 because of problem with the content of the question.