

Michigan Bar Examiners Changed How the Bar Exam Is Graded!

Beginning with the July 2012 Michigan Bar Exam, **the Board of Law Examiners changed the grading formula and stopped scaling the raw essay points on the Michigan portion of the bar exam.** Prior to that, between the February 2009 and February 2012 bar exam, the Michigan Board of Law Examiners scaled the average Michigan essay scores on an exam administration to match the average national scaling of the MBE score to equate the level of difficulty over time. Unfortunately, the Board of Law Examiners decided to go back to the original grading formula and the Michigan Bar Exam is now graded by combining your converted raw essay score with your MBE score, requiring an average combined score of a 135 or higher to pass. However, each section is weighted evenly (50/50). Since the MBE section is worth a total of 200 points (200 multiple choice questions valued at 1 point each), and the essay section is worth a total of 150 points (15 essays x 10 points each = 150), in order to weigh the two scores evenly, a conversion formula must be used. Therefore, the bar examiners multiply your total raw essay score by 4/3 or 1.3333 points to accomplish this conversion.

$$\text{Formula: } \frac{\text{MBE Scaled Score} + \frac{4}{3} (\text{Raw Essay Score})}{2} = \text{Combined Bar Exam Score}$$

If you haven't figured it out yet, what this means is that your **ESSAY SCORES ARE WORTH MORE THAN YOUR MBE SCORES!!** In fact, if you score a 10 on an essay question, you actually earn 13 points ($\frac{4}{3} \times 10 = 13$)! This has proven to be VERY beneficial to those who are not good at multiple choice type testing because there is no minimum passing score for either the MBE or the essay. Therefore, you can do really well on one portion and make up for deficiencies on another. The following are examples of how the formula works:

Example:

Formula: MBE Score = 129; Raw Essay Score = 106 ($\frac{4}{3}$) = 141 **Converted Essay Score**

$$\frac{129 + 141}{2} = 135 \text{ combined} = \text{PASS!}$$

Formula: MBE Score = 147; Raw Essay Score = 93; $\frac{4}{3}$ (93) = 123 (not rounded up)

$$\frac{147 + 123}{2} = 135 \text{ combined} = \text{PASS!}$$