

# The NextGen Bar Exam

June 11–13, 2025

Supreme Courts of Missouri, Iowa,  
Nebraska, Kansas and South Dakota

**NCBE** National Conference  
of Bar Examiners

Building a competent, ethical, and diverse legal profession.

NextGen  
**UBE** 



# Why Change the Bar Exam?

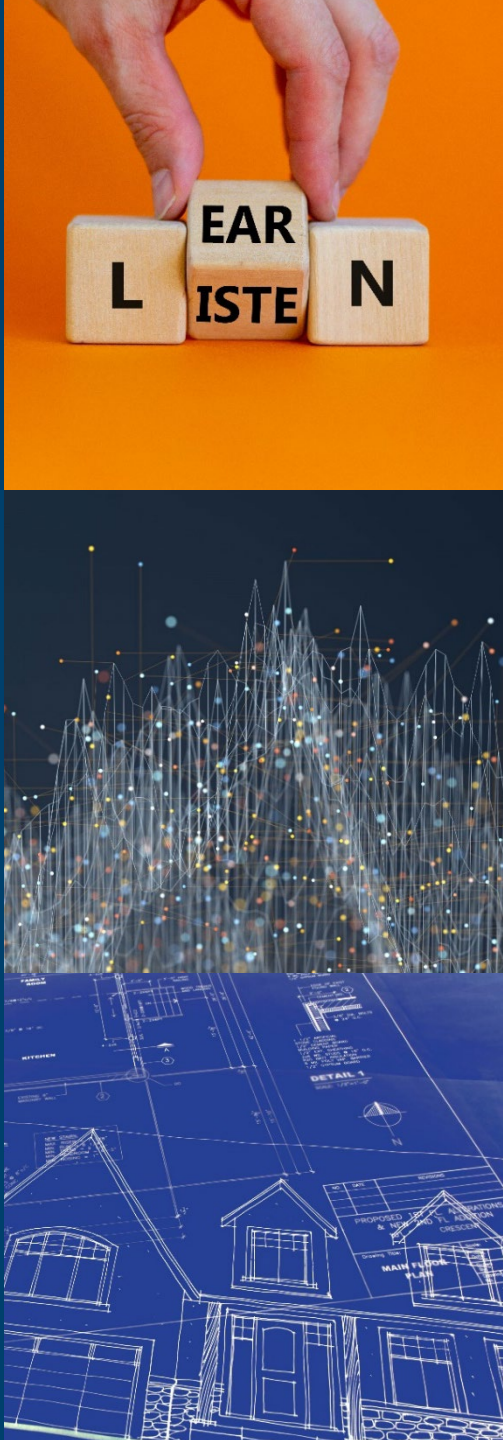
- The practice of law, like other professions, is changing. See, e.g., [CPAs](#), [Dentists](#), [Nurses](#)
- Periodic review of exam content via a practice analysis is a **best practice to ensure that a licensure exam maintains fidelity to current practice\***

\* *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*

# What is NextGen?

A comprehensive assessment measuring a broad array of lawyering skills in the context of the foundational knowledge areas, simulating actual practice.





# Testing Task Force Study

## Phase 1

Solicit feedback on current bar exam and ideas for NextGen

## Phase 2

National practice analysis to provide empirical data on job activities of newly licensed lawyers

## Phase 3

Translate results from Phases 1 and 2 into a recommended test design and blueprint



# Guiding Objectives for NextGen Exam

- Increase emphasis on lawyering skills
- Integrate foundational knowledge and skills
- Maintain score portability
- Keep the exam affordable



# NextGen Knowledge and Skills

# NextGen Tests Doctrine and Skills



# Some Skills Require Ethics Knowledge

- MRPC 1.1 (Competence)
- MRPC 1.2(a) & (d) (Scope of representation and allocation of authority between client and lawyer)
- MRPC 1.3 (Diligence)
- MRPC 1.4 (Communications)
- MRPC 1.6(a) & (c) (Confidentiality of Information)
- MRPC 1.7 (Conflict of Interest: Current Clients)
- MRPC 3.3(a)(1)-(2) (Candor to the Tribunal)
- MRPC 4.1 (Truthfulness in Statements to Others)
- MRPC 4.2 (Communication with Person Represented by Counsel)
- MRPC 4.3 (Dealing with Unrepresented Person)

**Client Counseling and Advising, Negotiation and Dispute Resolution, and Client Relationship and Management skills** to incorporate some rules of professional conduct within the scope of coverage

The background features a complex financial chart. At the top, there are candlestick patterns. Below them is a line graph with a solid blue line and a dashed blue line with circular markers. At the bottom, there is a bar chart with vertical bars of varying heights, colored in a gradient from dark blue to light blue. The entire background is set against a dark blue grid.

# Format and Structure

# Components of the NextGen Bar Exam

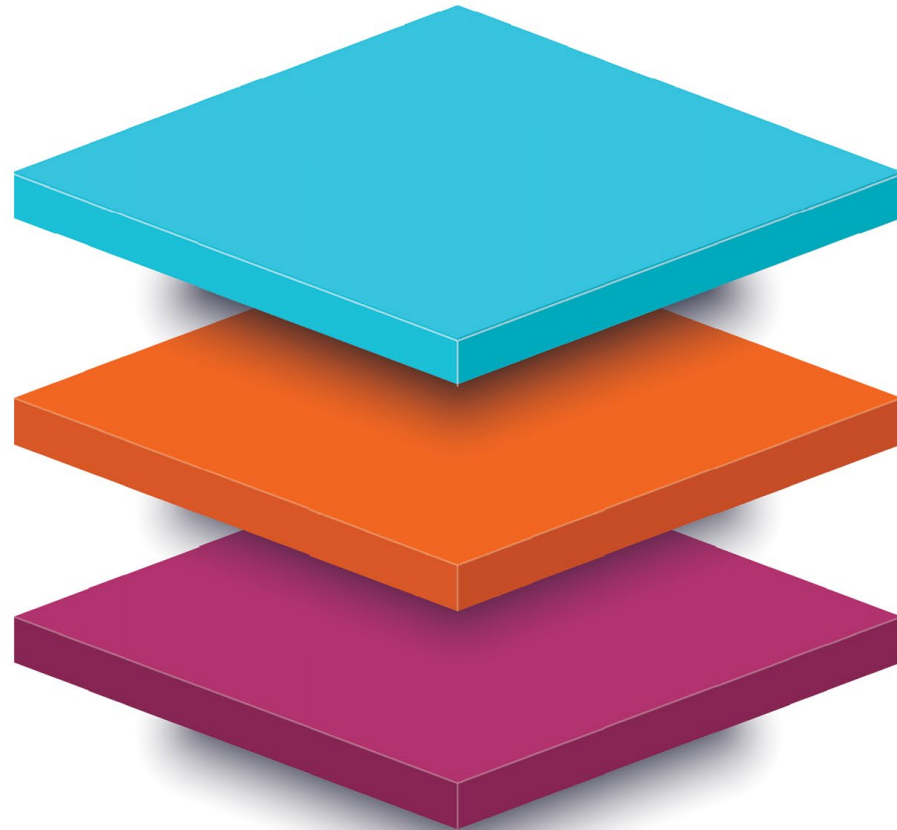
Stand-Alone  
Multiple-Choice  
Questions



Integrated  
Question Sets



Performance  
Tasks



# Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs)

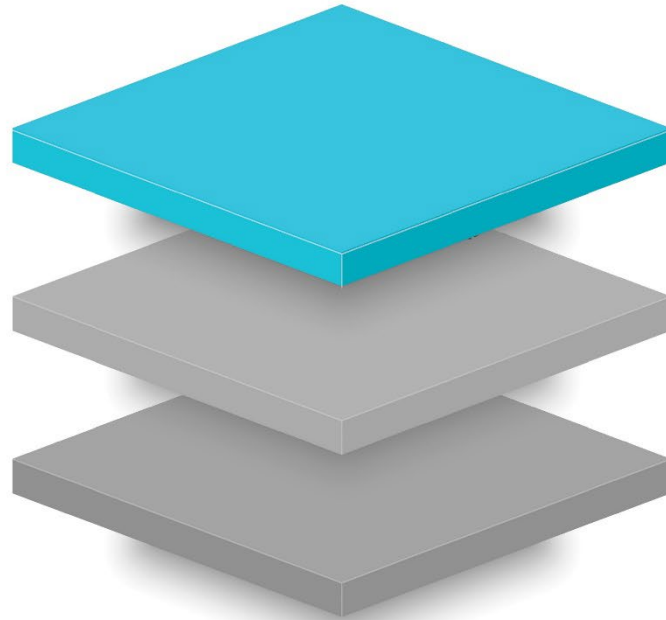
Stand-Alone  
Multiple-Choice  
Questions



Integrated  
Question Sets



Performance  
Tasks



- Two types of MCQs
  - Single-select
  - Multiple-select

# Integrated Question Sets

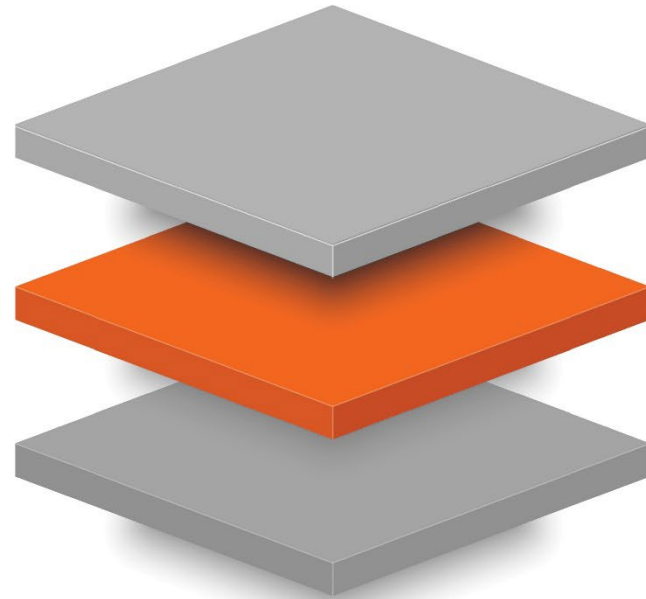
Stand-Alone  
Multiple-Choice  
Questions



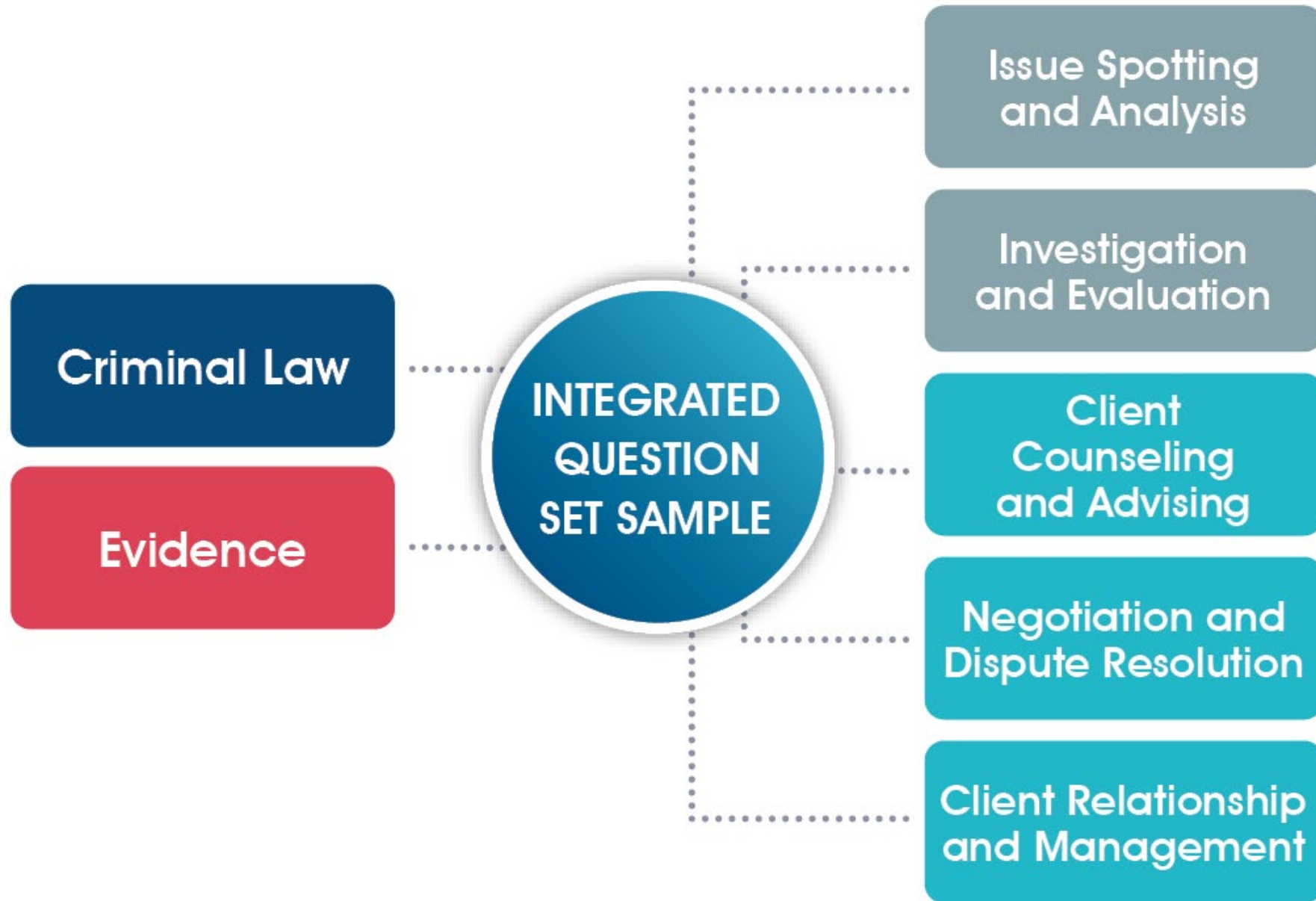
**Integrated  
Question Sets**



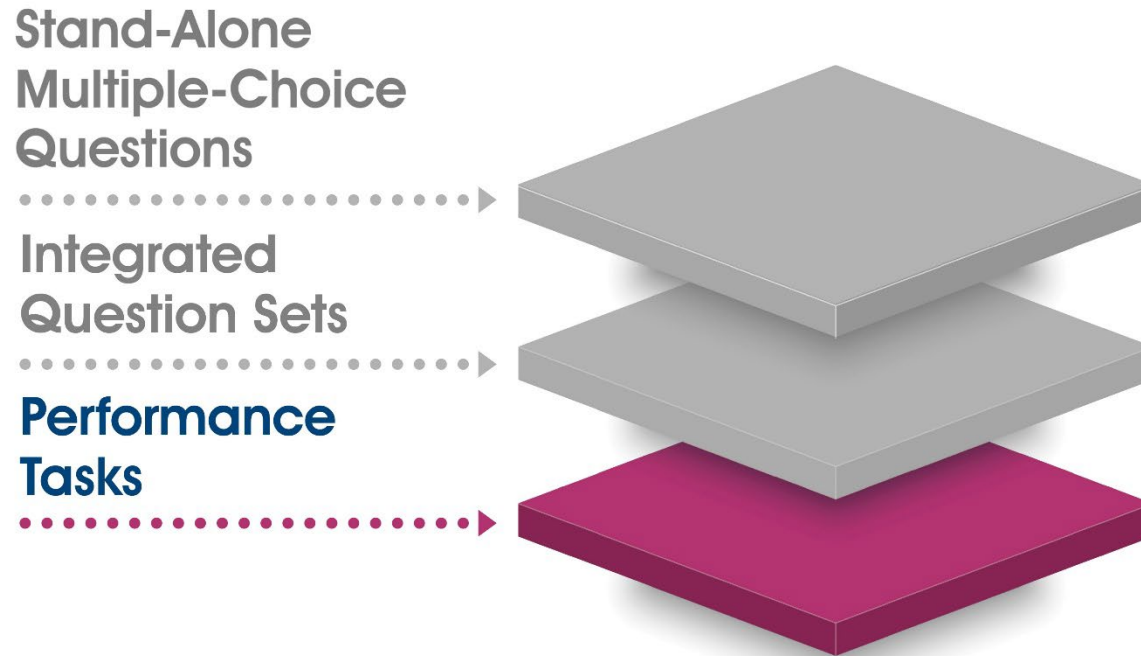
Performance  
Tasks



A scenario and relevant legal materials followed by multiple-choice and constructed-response questions



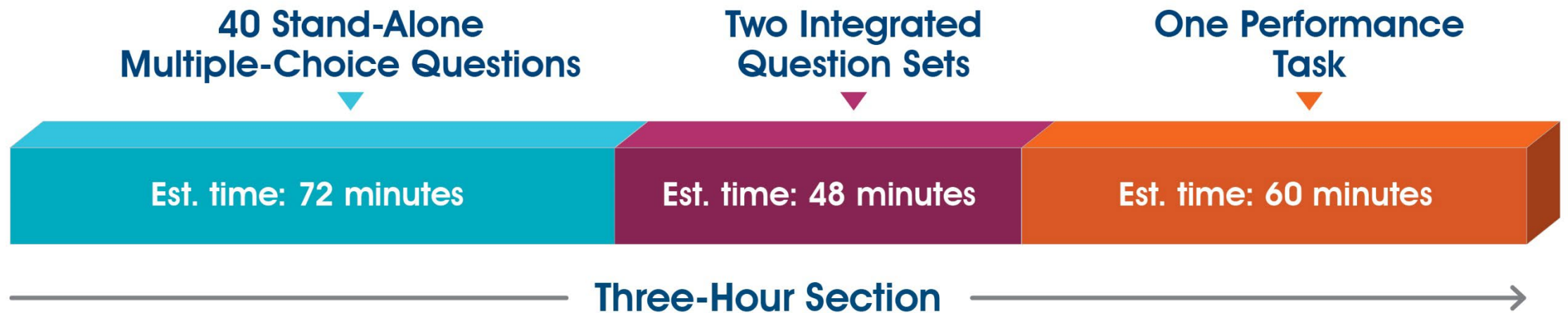
# Performance Tasks



- Like the current MPT, but shorter
- Some performance tasks may have a research element and a few multiple-choice and constructed-response questions

# NextGen Structure

Each three-hour section will consist of a mix of multiple-choice questions, integrated question sets, and one performance task. Based on research to date, we suggest that examinees typically spend about:





# Research Phases

# Research Phases

## Phase 1 – Pilot Testing 2022-2023

 [Pilot Testing Research Brief](#)

- Test new item types in a semi-realistic test setting
- Test the efficacy of providing legal resources
- General timing estimates
- More than 2,500 third/fourth year law students and recent graduates participating

# Research Phases

## Phase 2 - Field Testing

*January 2024*



[Field Test Research Brief](#)

- Test new item types at scale
- Confirm timing estimates
- Generate item performance data
- Get responses from a broad sample of examinees
- Use delivery system at scale
- More than 4,000 third/fourth-year law students and recent graduates participating

# Research Phases

## Phase 3 – Prototype Test

*October 2024*

- Full-length test
- Implement test delivery and scoring systems end-to-end
- Generate test performance data and create base scale
- Data for standard setting and concordance
- More than 2,000 July 2024 examinees participated

# NextGen Milestones



# NextGen<sup>®</sup>

Bar Exam of the Future

## NextGen Bar Exam Development & Implementation Timeline



2028

- ▶ Last administration of legacy bar exam (February)

2027

- ▶ NextGen and legacy bar exams administered concurrently

2026

- ▶ First administration of NextGen bar exam (July), concurrent with legacy bar exam
- ▶ Ongoing user portal optimization
- ▶ End-to-end testing

2025

- ▶ Candidate and jurisdiction user portal development
- ▶ Standard-setting study
- ▶ Base scale and concordance table set
- ▶ Additional pilot and user experience testing

2024

- ▶ Prototype exam and user experience testing
- ▶ Field testing

2023

- ▶ First jurisdiction NextGen adoptions announced
- ▶ Family law added to Foundational Concepts & Principles
- ▶ First sample questions published
- ▶ Content scope published

2021–2022

- ▶ Pilot testing

2022

- ▶ Preliminary content scope published

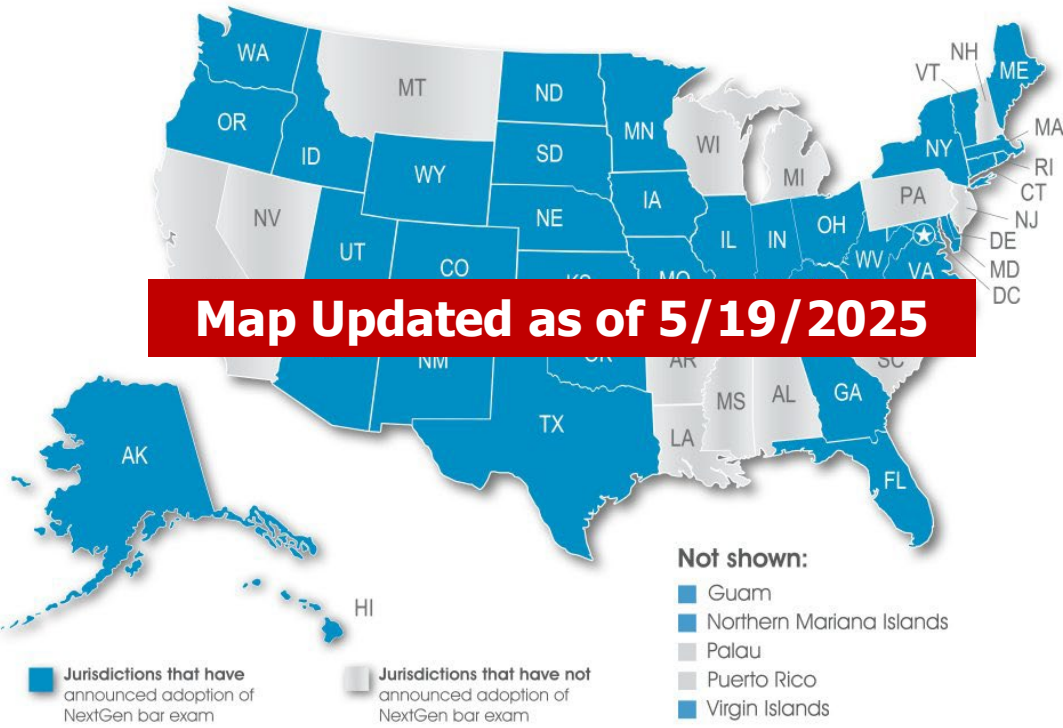
2021

- ▶ NextGen exam development begins
- ▶ Testing Task Force recommendations approved

2018–2021

- ▶ Testing Task Force study

# Jurisdiction Adoption



- MO** July 2026
- IA** July 2027
- NE** July 2027

- SD** July 2027
- KS** July 2028

All 5 MINKS jurisdictions use the following NCBE products, and plan to adopt the NextGen exam.

**MPRE**      **MEE**

**MBE**      **MPT**

# NextGen Score Portability

As with the current Uniform Bar Exam (UBE), examinees may transfer their NextGen bar exam scores between jurisdictions that participate in the UBE portability program.



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**Questions?**

# NextGen<sup>✓</sup>

## Bar Exam of the Future

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National Conference of Bar Examiners

[ncbex.org/exams/nextgen](https://ncbex.org/exams/nextgen)

[nextgenbarexam.ncbex.org](https://nextgenbarexam.ncbex.org)

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# Thank you.

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