

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 21, 2021

Delaware Board of Bar Examiners announces results of 2021 administration of the Delaware Bar Examination and adjustments to scoring methodology.

The Delaware Board of Bar Examiners is pleased to announce that 277 applicants were successful on the 2021 Delaware Bar Examination. The percentage of applicants who earned a passing score this year, 66.5%, is above the average of 62.5% for the six prior administrations of the exam.

Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the July 2021 administration of the Delaware Bar Examination was conducted remotely for the first time in Delaware history, using the format offered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners. A number of Delaware's applicants, along with thousands of applicants across the country, experienced technical issues with the testing software during the remote administration of the exam. In consultation with an expert in the field of high stakes standardized licensing exams – known as a psychometrician -- and with the approval of the Supreme Court, the Board of Bar Examiners delayed the release of the exam results by several weeks so that modifications to its scoring procedures could be made to mitigate the potential impact of these technical issues.

With respect to Delaware essay and Multistate Performance Test questions on which an applicant experienced a technical issue, the Board employed a pro rata adjustment methodology applied by its psychometrician. This methodology allowed for an upward adjustment to an applicant's affected essay score based on the difficulty level of the affected essay and his/her average performance on the written questions in which the applicant had no technical issues.

Individualized score adjustments were not feasible on the Multistate Bar Examination (“MBE”). However, in consultation with its psychometrician, the Board made an upward adjustment to the score of all applicants who experienced technical issues during the MBE. This upward adjustment was equivalent to the difference between the mean MBE score of the affected applicant population and the mean MBE score of the unaffected applicant population.

None of the scoring adjustments to the 2021 exam adversely affected any applicant, regardless of whether he/she experienced any technical issues. No applicant’s score was reduced as a result of applying the adjustments to the scoring methodology.

“The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented challenges for applicants to the Delaware Bar. These challenges were exacerbated by problems with the exam software. The scoring adjustments account for those technical issues while maintaining the fairness and integrity of the Delaware Bar Exam for all applicants,” said Board Chair Jennifer Wasson. “The Board extends its congratulations to the successful examinees and looks forward to working with them as they complete their admission requirements.”