# CARDOZO SCHOOL OF LAW

## The New York Bar Exam: A Guide for LL.M. Students

*Your step-by-step roadmap to eligibility, the exams, and admission*

> **How to use this guide.** It follows the order you will actually do things — first check that you qualify, then build your application, then pass the exams, then finish the extra requirements. Each section opens with a short summary you can remember, with the details underneath. Whenever you see **"Talk to Dean Myteberi,"** that is a sign your situation needs personal advising before you proceed.

Sources: New York Board of Law Examiners (BOLE), the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE), and Rule 520.6 of the Rules of the Court of Appeals (22 NYCRR 520.6). Verified current as of June 2026; because rules are changing during the NextGen transition, always confirm dates and details on BOLE's site: nybarexam.org.

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# Start Here: The Big Picture

Many Cardozo LL.M. students go on to take a U.S. bar exam, and the most popular choice is the New York State Bar. Cardozo supports you the whole way — through a dedicated bar workshop and one-on-one counseling on the logistics of applying. This guide brings together everything you need to know.

## The one idea to understand first: equivalency

To sit for the New York bar, a foreign law degree must be shown to be equivalent to an ABA-accredited U.S. J.D. That equivalency has **two parts:**

| Type | What it means |
|---|---|
| Durational | Your total legal study is at least three years long. |
| Substantive | Your studies were based on the principles of English common law. |

> **The "cure" rule.** If you are missing one of the two, you may be able to "cure" it by completing a qualifying LL.M. at an ABA-accredited U.S. law school — but an LL.M. can cure **only one** deficiency, never both. **Online LL.M. programs cannot cure any deficiency** — the curing LL.M. must be on campus.

Two bodies run the process: the **New York Court of Appeals** sets the admission rules (Rule 520.6), and the **Board of Law Examiners (BOLE)** decides whether foreign applicants are eligible and administers the exam.

## Your roadmap at a glance

| Phase | What you do |
|---|---|
| **1. Qualify** | Confirm your degree meets Rule 520.6 — and whether you need an LL.M. to cure a gap (Section II). |
| **2. Apply** | Create your NCBE account, then your BOLE ID, then submit the free Foreign Evaluation form (Section I). |
| **3. Document** | Send your Required Foreign Documents to BOLE before the deadline (Section I). |
| **4. Register** | Receive your eligibility decision, then register and pay the $750 exam fee (Section I). |
| **5. Pass** | Pass the UBE, complete the NYLC and pass the NYLE, and pass the MPRE (Section III). |
| **6. Finish** | Complete 50 hours of pro bono service and meet the Skills Competency requirement (Section IV). |

> **Heads-up: the exam is changing (NextGen UBE).** New York's **last legacy UBE will be February 2028**; the **NextGen UBE begins July 2028.** New York will keep accepting transferred UBE scores under current rules, but will **not** accept NextGen scores earned before July 2028. Separately, starting with the **July 2026** exam, four subjects (Conflict of Laws, Family Law, Trusts & Estates, and Secured

> Transactions) were removed from the written MEE — see Section III. Plan around the cycle in which you intend to sit.

# Section I — Applying to Sit for the New York Bar Exam

> **In short:** Create two accounts (NCBE, then BOLE), submit the free Foreign Evaluation form, mail your Required Foreign Documents to BOLE with your BOLE ID on everything, wait for your eligibility decision, then register and pay. Start as early as possible — ideally before you leave home for your LL.M.

## The five steps

### Step 1 — Create your NCBE account

Go to https://portal.nybarexam.org/ and click the NCBE page auth.ncbex.org/account/create and create a National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) account. When you do:

- Enter your foreign law school in the **"Non-ABA-Approved Law School or Law Office Study"** box.
- **Do not** enter your Cardozo LL.M. information here.
- No Social Security number? Enter your passport (or other national ID) number in the **"National Identification Number"** field and pick the issuing country.
- A foreign phone number is fine — it does not need to be a U.S. number.

### Step 2 — Create your BOLE ID

Your **BOLE ID** is the electronic ID that BOLE assigns to every New York applicant. Create it at portal.nybarexam.org/CreateAccount.aspx. You will provide:

- **Full legal name** — exactly as it appears on the government photo ID you will bring to the exam.
- **Date of birth**
- **An email you check often** — BOLE communicates only by email
- **Your NCBE number** (from Step 1)

If asked where you will earn your LL.M., be sure to select **Cardozo School of Law – Yeshiva University.**

### Step 3 — Submit the Online Foreign Evaluation form

Every foreign-educated applicant must complete the free Foreign Evaluation form at https://portal.nybarexam.org/. (It costs nothing; you pay the registration fee only later, after BOLE finds you eligible.) Have ready:

- The name and address of each university where you studied law;
- Your dates of attendance for each term, and the type and date of each degree awarded.

> **Important timing.** Submit the Foreign Evaluation form **before** you send your supporting documents, and before, during, or after your LL.M. application. **Submitting it is not the same as applying to sit for the exam.** We recommend completing it **while you are still in your home country**, because the

original, sealed documents BOLE needs are far easier to obtain there. You will get an auto-confirmation email — check spam before contacting BOLE if it doesn't arrive.

### Step 4 — Send your Required Foreign Documents to BOLE

Gather your "Required Foreign Documentation" from the country where you earned your law degree and send it directly to BOLE. **Put your BOLE ID on every document and every piece of correspondence** — without it, the document will not be matched to your file or reviewed.

1. **Official transcript(s).** A final, official transcript from every law school attended, showing dates of attendance, courses taken and passed, grades, credits, the degree awarded, and the date awarded.
2. **Degree certificate.** Only if your transcript does not clearly state the degree awarded and the date it was conferred. (A diploma counts as a degree certificate.)
3. **Proof you met the educational requirements to practice law.** If you are admitted in any foreign jurisdiction, a copy of your admission certificate satisfies this. If you are not admitted, submit proof of the educational requirements plus confirmation from the bar authority that you fulfilled them.
4. **Accreditation statement.** A written statement from your country's accrediting agency that your law school was recognized and approved throughout your studies. Usually required only if you are the first graduate of your school to apply (BOLE keeps a list of schools it has already accredited).
5. **LL.M. Certificate of Attendance (COA).** Only if you need the LL.M. to qualify. You complete it at the **end** of your studies, during the exam-application phase; Cardozo's Registrar then confirms it and sends it to BOLE with your transcript once your degree is conferred. Typical timing: late May/early June (July takers) or late December/early January (February takers). If it is delayed, email cardozoregistrar@yu.edu with your name and BOLE ID.

**Document rules — read carefully.** Originals must be sent **directly to BOLE by the issuing institution**. Faxes and photocopies certified by a notary (or anyone other than an authorized official at the issuing institution) are **not accepted.** All submitted documents become BOLE's property and are not returned (so Cardozo cannot use your home-country originals — send a separate set to BOLE). Do not send anything before you submit the Foreign Evaluation form. BOLE will not begin review until items 1–4 above are all received. **All documents and correspondence must contain your BOLE ID number.**

**If your school won't mail the transcript directly:** After a good-faith effort, ask the school to issue you an original transcript in a **sealed envelope** bearing its seal and stamp. Place that (with a certified English translation, if needed) inside a larger envelope and mail it to BOLE, together with a cover letter from the school explaining that it could not send the transcript directly.

### Step 5 — Get your decision, then register and pay

After BOLE reviews your documents (and, if required, confirms your completed LL.M.) and finds you eligible, you may register for the exam and pay the **$750 application fee** (non-refundable, even if you are later found ineligible). This step can be taken during your LL.M. studies.

| Deadline | When |
|---|---|
| Required Foreign Documents received by BOLE | **Oct. 1** for the July exam; **May 1** for the February exam (but submit much earlier) |
| Realistic processing time | BOLE takes 3–6 weeks just to flag missing documents; the full evaluation can take up to 6 months |
| Eligibility decision (if docs in by Oct 1) | Usually February–March |
| Exam registration period | **April 1–30** for July; **Nov 1–30** for February |

> **In short:** "Early" is the whole strategy. The deadlines are late, but the processing is slow — aim to send documents before your LL.M. even begins.
>
> **The NY Bar Exam Administration:** It is administered twice per year, every year: typically on the last Tuesday and Wednesday of July; and last Tuesday and Wednesday of February.

## Document FAQs

### What is a "degree certificate"?

A separate document stating the name of the degree (e.g., LL.B.) and the date conferred. You need it only if your transcript doesn't already show both. A diploma qualifies.

### What is "proof of fulfillment of educational requirements," and how do I get it?

This is the part applicants find most confusing. If you **are** admitted to practice at home, a copy of your admission certificate works. If you are **not** admitted, submit an official letter from the body that licenses attorneys in your country — a government ministry, the Supreme Court, or a quasi-governmental regulator (e.g., the SRA in the U.K.). BOLE has sometimes accepted a certified letter from your law school's dean or rectorate.

The letter must state that you fulfilled the **educational** requirements for admission. BOLE generally does **not** treat mandatory internships, "post-graduate bar school," or similar practical training as educational requirements — so applicants who have not yet done such training are usually still eligible. In countries where a law degree alone qualifies you to practice (e.g., Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine), obtain a ministry letter saying so, ideally citing the governing statute and attaching a copy.

### English common-law "conversion route" applicants (GDL + LPC or Bar Vocational Course)

You must qualify under Rule 520.6(b)(2) by proving your combined law study and training contract (articles) meets the **durational** requirement. Helpful documents: an admission certificate from the accrediting agency; official transcripts confirming dates and completion; a certificate verifying your law office study (clerkship/articles) and its dates; plus proof of your completed Cardozo LL.M.

### When do I submit the LL.M. Certificate of Attendance?

Near graduation — not before your LL.M. begins. You'll get detailed guidance from BOLE and Cardozo during your final semester, and it is submitted electronically once your studies conclude.

# Section II — Do I Qualify Under Rule 520.6?

> **In short:** Find your situation in the table below. A 3+ year common-law degree usually qualifies on its own; a civil-law degree (or a short/online/joint degree) generally needs a Cardozo LL.M. — and sometimes a waiver. When in doubt, talk to Dean Myteberi.

Every applicant must still complete the Foreign Evaluation and submit documents (Section I), even if no LL.M. is required.

| Your foreign law degree | What you need |
|---|---|
| **Common law, 3+ years** (e.g., Israel, U.K., Australia, New Zealand, Canada) | Usually no LL.M. needed. Complete the Foreign Evaluation and submit your documents. Exceptions exist (dual degrees; U.K. "conversion route") — see notes below. |
| **Civil law, 3+ years** | Durational equivalency is met; you need an LL.M. to cure substantive equivalency — at least 24 credits at Cardozo, including 12 credits in bar-tested subjects approved under Rule 520.6. |
| **Common law, under 3 years** (e.g., 2-year degree) | Complete an LL.M. to cure the durational gap. You must also meet the 24-credit / 12-bar-subject requirement. Cardozo's curriculum satisfies these. |
| **Civil law, under 3 years** | Complete a Cardozo LL.M. **and** seek a waiver of strict compliance with Rule 520.6. **Talk to Dean Myteberi.** |

## Special situations

- **Degree took longer than 5 years.** The J.D. rule expects completion within five years. Some LL.M. students were once deemed ineligible for taking "too long," but recent challenges before the Court of Appeals have succeeded. **Talk to Dean Myteberi.**
- **Degree earned online/remotely.** BOLE requires at least three years of in-person instruction. If you can't show this, you'll need a Cardozo LL.M. plus a waiver. **Talk to Dean Myteberi.**
- **Joint degree (e.g., Law & Business).** You may need to prove your law content equals the J.D. minimum of 83 credit hours (Rule 520.3(c)(1)(i); each credit hour = 700 minutes of in-class instruction). **Talk to Dean Myteberi.**
- **ABA courses taken abroad (e.g., a U.S. program in London).** These do **not** count toward the 24 credits. All qualifying ABA coursework must be completed on a U.S. campus.
- **Which Cardozo courses count?** Cardozo keeps a full list of courses approved under Rule 520.6. Many are offered in only one semester, so plan ahead using the **LL.M. Curriculum Guide (page 15)** when choosing courses.

# Section III — The Exams

> **In short:** To be admitted you must pass three things: the UBE (the two-day written exam), the New York Law Exam (after a free online course), and the MPRE (ethics). Most students also take a commercial prep course.

The New York bar exam itself has two pieces — the **Uniform Bar Exam (UBE)** and the **New York Law Exam (NYLE)** — and you must pass both. Separately, you must pass the **MPRE** to be admitted.

Almost all J.D. and LL.M. candidates enroll in a two-month commercial prep course after finishing their studies. These companies are not affiliated with Cardozo; do your own due diligence on price and quality, and choose based on your goals and resources.

## III(a) — The Uniform Bar Exam (UBE)

The UBE is a two-day, in-person exam adopted by most U.S. states. It tests general legal principles, analysis and reasoning, and communication — the core knowledge and skills to begin practicing. Your score is portable, but **each jurisdiction sets its own rules for foreign applicants**, so passing in New York does not automatically qualify you elsewhere. (NCBE overview: ncbex.org/exams/ube.)

### When and how to register

- Administered the **last Tuesday and Wednesday of February and July.**
- Register **Nov 1–30** for the following February, and **April 1–30** for the following July.

### Components and weighting

| Part | Weight | What it is |
|---|---|---|
| **MBE** | 50% | 200 multiple-choice questions applying fundamental legal principles to fact patterns. |
| **MEE** | 30% | Six 30-minute essays applying rules of law to facts to reach a conclusion. |
| **MPT** | 20% | Two 90-minute simulated lawyering tasks (e.g., draft a memo or brief) using a provided case file and library. |

### How exam day is structured

| | Morning (3 hrs) | Afternoon (3 hrs) |
|---|---|---|
| **Day 1** | Two MPTs (90 min each) | MEE — six 30-minute essays |
| **Day 2** | 100 MBE questions | 100 MBE questions |

### What it tests

**Foundational subjects (MBE):**

- Constitutional Law,

- Contracts/Sales,
- Criminal Law & Procedure,
- Evidence,
- Federal Civil Procedure,
- Real Property, and
- Torts.

The MEE may test those subjects plus:

- Business Associations
- Conflicts of Laws
- Family Law
- Trust & Estates
- UCC Articles 2 and 9

> **Recent change (effective July 2026 exam).** Four subjects were **removed from the MEE**: Conflict of Laws, Family Law, Trusts & Estates, and Secured Transactions (UCC Article 9). From July 2026 through February 2028, Family Law and Trusts & Estates may still appear on the **MPT** — meaning you don't memorize their rules; any needed law is provided in the task. This aligns the legacy exam with the upcoming NextGen exam.

### Passing score and transferring a score

- New York requires **266 out of 400** to pass.
- You may transfer a UBE score from another jurisdiction, but you must still establish durational and substantive qualification under Rule 520.6 (see Rule 520.2(b)(2); process for transferred scores). A transferred score is accepted for **three years** from the date you sat. Note the NextGen limits in the heads-up box above.

## III(b) — The New York Law Course (NYLC) & New York Law Exam (NYLE)

> **In short:** Watch a free ~17-hour online course (NYLC), which unlocks the NYLE — a 50-question, open-book online test on New York law. Pass mark: 30/50.

**The NYLC** is a free, online, on-demand course of roughly 17 hours of recorded lectures with embedded questions you must answer correctly to keep watching. It covers 12 New York-specific subjects: Administrative Law; Business Relationships; Civil Practice & Procedure; Conflict of Laws; Contracts; Criminal Law & Procedure; Evidence; Matrimonial & Family Law; Professional Responsibility; Real Property; Torts & Tort Damages; and Trusts, Wills & Estates. Register through "New York Law Course" in your BOLE account, and finish all videos before registering for the NYLE. You keep unlimited re-watch access afterward.

**The NYLE** is a 50-item, two-hour, **open-book**, online multiple-choice test on those same New York subjects. It is offered four times a year — **March, June, September, and December.** Register (after finishing the NYLC) at least **30 days before** your chosen date. The passing score is **30 of 50 (60%)**; results usually post within two weeks. If you fail, you must retake **both** the NYLC and the NYLE.

You may complete the NYLC up to one year before, or any time after, you first sit for the UBE — subject to the rule that a complete admission application be filed within three years of your second UBE day. The NYLE costs **$27** (paid to ExamSoft); the NYLC is free. More at nybarexam.org.

### III(c) — The Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE)

> **In short:** A separate ethics exam you must pass within three years (before or after) of passing the bar exam. New York's passing score is 85. Most students take it in the spring of their LL.M.

Everyone who passes the bar exam must also pass the MPRE (administered by NCBE) before being admitted. You may take it before or after the bar exam, but you must pass it within **three years** — before or after — of the bar exam, measured from when you sat each. If more than three years pass, you must retake it before being certified to the Appellate Division (the court that conducts character-and-fitness review and admits you).

The MPRE is offered three times a year — **March, August, and November** — and New York's passing score is **85**. More at nybarexam.org.

## Section IV — Additional Requirements for Admission

### IV(a) — The 50-Hour Pro Bono Requirement

> **In short:** Separate from the exam: 50 hours of unpaid, law-related, attorney-supervised legal service for people who couldn't otherwise afford help. It can be done anywhere (even abroad) and any time from one year before your LL.M. until you apply for admission — including after the exam.

#### What counts

Your pro bono work must be all three of the following:

- **Unpaid**, for people who otherwise couldn't access or afford legal help;
- **Law-related** — the kind of work licensed attorneys do (advising, counseling, or representing on questions of law);
- **Supervised** by an attorney licensed in the jurisdiction where you do the work.

Qualifying settings include NGOs advancing justice or human rights; legal-aid organizations; a government office or agency, a judge or court, or a prosecutor's office; and even a law firm — provided the firm does not charge and the work serves someone who couldn't otherwise afford it.

#### If you did the work outside the United States

Complete the **Form Affidavit of Compliance** provided by the Appellate Division where you will be sworn in, signed by your supervising attorney. Tips:

- Complete it in English (attach a certified translation if it's in another language). Use your **permanent address**, not your Cardozo address.
- Originals only — photocopies/PDFs are not accepted. Secure original signatures, and describe your work in detail (services provided, legal issues, who you served, and the organization).

- Your signature must be notarized under U.S. practice. Abroad, use a notary at a U.S. embassy/consulate; if none is available, use your country's equivalent and attach an English certification of that officer's authority.

Find New York opportunities at probono.net/ny/oppsguide.

> **Realistic advice for completing it at Cardozo.** You'll likely complete **some** hours here, but probably not all 50 — New York's definition is narrow and your year will be busy. **Clinics count automatically**; externships count only if the work, employer, and supervisor meet the definitions. Many opportunities fall over Fall, December, and Spring breaks. Often the easiest path is to complete this requirement **after the exam**, or to confirm whether work you did **before** your LL.M. already qualifies. The Center for Public Service Law can help.

More information: the New York Pro Bono admission requirements & FAQs. Still stuck? Email ProBonoRule@nycourts.gov.

## IV(b) — The New York Skills Competency Requirement (Rule 520.18)

> **In short:** Since 2018, you must show you can competently practice. Of the five pathways, LL.M. students usually rely on Pathway 4 (a six-month apprenticeship) or Pathway 5 (prior practice in another country). You must file your complete admission application within three years of your UBE.

There are five pathways (full details: Court of Appeals guidance). Pathways 1–3 rely on law-school coursework and experience; **Pathways 4 and 5** rely on practical experience outside law school and are usually the realistic options for LL.M. students. (One exception: domestic or Canadian students who already met the bar's educational requirements during their J.D. may have room to satisfy Pathways 1–3 during the LL.M. — contact Dean Myteberi to be approved.)

### Pathway 4 — Apprenticeship

A continuous six-month, full-time apprenticeship (paid or unpaid) in a law office in the U.S. or abroad, beginning after your first law degree. (Full-time generally means 37–40 hours/week; part-time 20–25.) Your supervisor(s) must have been authorized to practice and in good standing for at least two years where the apprenticeship takes place. If you have several shorter apprenticeships totaling six months rather than one continuous one, you may petition the Court of Appeals to waive strict compliance.

### Pathway 5 — Prior practice in another jurisdiction

If you were authorized to practice law in another country, submit proof that you were in good standing and practiced full-time for at least one year (or part-time for two) after authorization. Formal bar admission isn't required, as long as all other requirements are met.

> **In-house counsel abroad?** You likely still qualify. Rule 520.18(a)(5) covers attorneys in lawful practice in a country that permits practice without formal bar admission. The Court's own example: in some countries in-house counsel are barred from bar membership yet are authorized to practice — such practice can satisfy Pathway 5, with proof to the Appellate Division that it complied with that jurisdiction's rules.

Deadline: you must file a complete admission application — including the **Affidavit of Compliance** for your chosen pathway — within **three years** of your second UBE day (Rule 520.12); otherwise the application is incomplete. Detailed FAQs: Court of Appeals Skills Competency guidance; questions: nyskillsrule@nycourts.gov.

# Quick Reference

## Money & scores

| Item | Amount |
|---|---|
| Foreign Evaluation form | Free |
| NYLC (online course) | Free |
| Bar exam application (foreign-educated, §520.6) | $750 (non-refundable) |
| NYLE | $27 (to ExamSoft) |
| UBE passing score (New York) | 266 / 400 |
| NYLE passing score | 30 / 50 (60%) |
| MPRE passing score (New York) | 85 |

## Dates to remember

| What | When |
|---|---|
| UBE administered | Last Tue & Wed of February and July |
| UBE registration | Nov 1–30 (Feb exam) / April 1–30 (July exam) |
| Required Foreign Documents due | Oct 1 (July exam) / May 1 (Feb exam) — submit earlier |
| NYLE offered | March, June, September, December (register ≥30 days ahead) |
| MPRE offered | March, August, November |
| NextGen UBE in New York | Last legacy UBE: Feb 2028 · First NextGen: July 2028 |

## Who to contact

| For… | Contact |
|---|---|
| LL.M. Certificate of Attendance / transcripts | Cardozo Registrar — cardozoregistrar@yu.edu |
| Eligibility edge cases & waivers | Dean Myteberi |
| Pro bono questions | ProBonoRule@nycourts.gov |
| Skills Competency questions | nyskillsrule@nycourts.gov |

| For… | Contact |
|---|---|
| Official rules & forms | BOLE Foreign Legal Education page |

> **A final word.** This guide is meant to make a complex process feel manageable — take it one phase at a time, and start early. Because the rules are actively changing during the NextGen transition, confirm dates and details on BOLE's website before you act, and reach out to us whenever you're unsure. We're here to help you get there.