



POLICY

VICTORIAN BAR ENTRANCE EXAMINATION POLICY

INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE SITTING ARRANGEMENTS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

The Victorian Bar is committed to promoting access to the Readers' Course and to the Bar.

To access the Victorian Bar Readers' Course, candidates must successfully sit and pass the Victorian Bar Entrance Examination (**the Exam**) with the minimum required grade for each of the following three components:

- (1) Ethics;
- (2) Evidence; and
- (3) A practice procedure paper of their choosing (civil or criminal).

The Bar Council has delegated all matters related to the management and administration of the Exam to the Exam Committee.

Eligibility to sit the Exam

The Bar Exam is held twice per year and candidates may choose to take one or more of the component parts of the Exam in one sitting.

To be eligible to undertake the Exam, a candidate must:

- either be admitted as an Australian Lawyer or expect on reasonable grounds to become an Australian Lawyer by the time they sign the Bar Roll.
- be of good fame and character and a fit and proper person.
- be willing and able to undertake either of the next two Readers' Courses following their successful completion of all three components of the Exam.
- be prepared to Read with an eligible Mentor from the day of commencement of the Readers' Course.
- comply with the Exam Rules.
- register and pay the relevant Exam fee. The fee is non-refundable.

There is a full Exam fee waiver for Indigenous candidates.

General feedback regarding the Exam is provided to all unsuccessful candidates in the form of selected model answers, which will be made available after results are finalised.

Passing the Exam

The candidate will be required to pass all three exam components with the minimum required grade of **75%** per paper, over a total of four consecutive Exam sittings from the first Exam sitting to three further Exam sittings thereafter (**the Permitted Exam Period**). Candidates will not be offered a place in the Readers' Course unless they have passed all three components within the Permitted Exam Period.

Procedure Name:	VB Entrance Exam Policy	Date Approved: 21 May 2024
Approved By:	The Victorian Bar Council	Date Last Reviewed:
Page 1 of 2		



As candidates may choose to take one or more component parts of the Exam in one sitting, any successfully completed component(s) will carry a 'credit' for the Permitted Exam Period.

Candidates who have successfully passed the Exam, may receive an offer to commence the next Readers' Course or may be required to submit a preference for course intake.

Alternative sitting arrangements

A candidate may make an application for alternative sitting arrangements if:

- (a) they live interstate, overseas, or more than 100 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD; or
- (b) they are a person with a disability who requires an adjustment, within the meaning of relevant anti-discrimination legislation, including:
 - i. *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth);
 - ii. *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic); and
 - iii. *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth); or
- (c) an adjustment is required in order for the Victorian Bar to otherwise comply with its obligations under anti-discrimination legislation, including:
 - i. the legislation listed in (b) above;
 - ii. *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth); and
 - iii. other relevant anti-discrimination legislation.

Applications for alternative sitting arrangements must be made to the Admissions Officer by no less than five business days before the date of the Exam.

Application documentation for alternative sitting arrangements

Applications for alternative sitting arrangements must be submitted by completing the Application Form ([link](#)). The Application Form must:

- (a) clearly identify the alternative sitting arrangements that are being requested;
- (b) provide an explanation of the reason why each arrangement is sought;
- (c) include Section B, completed by a medical professional(s), where arrangements relate to a candidate's disability, injury or medical condition; and
- (d) provide the candidate's consent for the application (de-identified) to be forwarded to:
 - i. the Accessibility Advisory Panel for assessment; and/or
 - ii. the Exam Committee for final determination.

Without all of the information requested in the Application Form, we will be unable to progress a candidate's application for alternative sitting arrangements.

The Admissions Officer may request further supporting documentation from the candidate, including additional information from the candidate's treating medical professional(s).

Review process for alternative sitting arrangements applications

The Admissions Officer may consult the Accessibility Advisory Panel for advice about any aspect of an application for alternative sitting arrangements, including whether any additional information is required.

The Exam Committee will have regard to any recommendation made by the Accessibility Advisory Panel before making a determination.

Procedure Name:	VB Entrance Exam Policy	Date Approved: 21 May 2024
Approved By:	The Victorian Bar Council	Date Last Reviewed:
Page 1 of 2		



A Reader Applicant may seek a review of the Exam Committee’s decision by giving notice requesting such a review to the Admissions Officer within five business days of receipt of notice of the decision.

Where a Reader Applicant gives such notice, the Bar Executive must review the decision and may, in its absolute discretion, uphold, reverse, or vary the decision.

Special consideration

Candidates may apply for special consideration in circumstances where:

- (a) they are registered for the Exam and believe that their exam performance may be affected or significantly affected due to extenuating circumstances beyond their control; or
- (b) they sat the Exam and believe that their exam performance may have been affected or significantly affected due to extenuating circumstances beyond their control.

All special consideration applications must be made to the Admissions Officer by no later than the five business days after the Exam sitting.

Application documentation for special consideration

Applications for special consideration must be submitted by completing the Application Form ([link](#)). The Application Form must:

- (a) provide the reason(s) as to why special consideration is being sought;
- (b) clearly identify any impact on the applicant’s performance on the Exam date;
- (c) include Section B, completed by a medical professional(s), where the reason relates to a candidate’s disability, injury or medical condition; and
- (d) provide the candidate’s consent for the application (de-identified) to be forwarded to the Exam Committee for final determination.

Without all of the information requested in the Application Form, we will be unable to progress a candidate’s application for special consideration.

The Admissions Officer may request further supporting documentation from either the candidate or the candidate’s treating medical professional(s).

Note: Any application made after sitting the Exam will require an additional written explanation as to the circumstances that prevented the application from being made prior to sitting the Exam.

Review process for special consideration applications

The Exam Committee will make a final determination with respect to all applications for special consideration.

In exercising the discretion to grant or refuse an application for special consideration, the Exam Committee will take into account the following matters:

- (a) the severity or likely severity of the impact of the circumstances relied on by the Reader Applicant, including:
 - (i) the Reader Applicant’s statement of the impact of the circumstances on their ability to undertake, or perform in, the Entrance Exam; and
 - (ii) the extent to which supporting documentation supports the Reader Applicant’s statement about the impact of those circumstances;

Procedure Name:	VB Entrance Exam Policy	Date Approved: 21 May 2024
Approved By:	The Victorian Bar Council	Date Last Reviewed:
Page 1 of 2		



- (b) the need to uphold the integrity of the Entrance Exam, so that those who receive an offer of a place in the Readers' Course have an appropriate level of knowledge of the matters tested by the Exam;
- (c) the appropriateness of requiring the Reader Applicant to undertake alternative or additional assessment; and
- (d) any other matter that the Exam Committee considers relevant.

An applicant may be required to do a supplementary assessment, subject to determination by the Exam Committee.

Late applications for special consideration

Any late special consideration applications will need to include detailed reasons for the late application, and it will be at the discretion of the Exam Committee whether to accept the application for consideration and determination.

Privacy

All information provided to the Bar in an Application Form or further supporting documentation in respect of applications for alternative sitting arrangements or special consideration are subject to the Bar's Privacy and Security of Information policy, found on the Bar's website by following this [link](#).

The personal information requested in an Application Form or further supporting documentation is collected by the Victorian Bar for the purposes of considering and determining the candidate's application for alternative sitting arrangements or special consideration. This information will be shared with members of the Victorian Bar including the Chair of the Exam Committee and members of the Accessibility Advisory Panel, on a confidential basis, as described in this policy and the Victorian Bar Exam Rules and Conditions ([link](#)).

By completing this form, the candidate consents to their personal information (including sensitive information) being used for the above purposes.

Ongoing disclosure requirements

Should a candidate's application for alternative sitting arrangements or special consideration disclose any information relevant to whether they are a fit and proper person for the purposes of rule 13 of the *Legal Profession Uniform General Rules 2015*, they will also be required to make full and frank disclosure of these matters as part of their application to commence the Bar Readers' Course.

The Victorian Bar is a delegate of the Victorian Legal Services Board (VLSB), and in exercise of its statutory functions under the *Legal Profession Uniform Law*, the Bar assesses whether an applicant for barrister practising certificate is fit and proper person to hold an Australian practising certificate and to join as a member of the Bar association.

More information can be found on the VLSB's website:

- [Fit and proper person policy](#)
- [Mental health policy](#)

The Bar's membership eligibility requirements are otherwise covered under the [Constitution](#).

Procedure Name:	VB Entrance Exam Policy	Date Approved: 21 May 2024
Approved By:	The Victorian Bar Council	Date Last Reviewed:
Page 1 of 2		



All applications for alternative sitting arrangements or special consideration should be addressed to the Admissions Officer at:

Admissions Officer
Owen Dixon Chambers East
Level 5
205 William Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
exam@vicbar.com.au

Multiple failed attempts

Generally where a candidate fails the Exam, they may register to sit the failed paper(s) at the next scheduled sitting.

Review of exam results and supplementary assessments for certain exam candidates is covered under a Bar Council approved protocol. This protocol applies only to certain candidates who have failed an exam paper three times and seeks a review.

Any such requests are to be made in writing to the Admissions Officer in accordance with the protocol, which can be found on the Victorian Bar website.

Procedure Name:	VB Entrance Exam Policy	Date Approved: 21 May 2024
Approved By:	The Victorian Bar Council	Date Last Reviewed:
Page 1 of 2		