

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO



FEDERAL BAR EXAMINATION

NOTICE TO APPLICANTS

The United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico must verify that attorneys admitted to practice before this Court are proficient in the English language and capable of rendering effective assistance of counsel pursuant to the Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Accordingly, applicants for district bar membership are required to execute a certification of proficiency in the English language as part of their application for the federal bar examination.

The Court has directed inclusion of a mandatory essay question in the federal bar examination. The essay question will not be graded on a percentage basis but, rather, on a “pass/fail” basis. The purpose of the question is to offer the applicant an opportunity to develop a concise and logically organized essay that will enable the Court to evaluate the applicant’s ability to express his or her thoughts clearly, coherently and effectively using Standard English. The Court does not seek perfection in the written language. However, the Court must verify that the applicant is capable of rendering constitutionally effective legal assistance.

In order to pass the federal bar examination, applicants must obtain both a minimum score of 65 percentage points in the multiple-choice portion of the exam and a grade of “pass” on the essay question. Applicants who do not answer the essay question will be deemed to have failed the federal bar examination, regardless of the result obtained in the multiple choice portion of the exam.

An applicant who passes the multiple choice portion of the federal bar examination, but who otherwise does not satisfactorily answer the essay question, will be referred to the District Examination Committee for further evaluation.