

1.2: PART I- BECOMING AN ATTORNEY IN NYS

WHAT FORMAL EDUCATION IS REQUIRED TO BECOME AN ATTORNEY IN NYS?

- High School Degree
- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college
- Juris Doctorate Degree from an American Law School

There are some exceptions and special rules for attorneys who move to NYS from another country. Those will depend on what country and legal system they are licensed to practice in.

Regarding the college degree, law schools are not particularly concerned about a student's major. Most important are your college grades and your score on the Law School Admission Test, most commonly known as the LSAT. Law school is typically a three-year program, and most law schools require full-time attendance. One can attend any law school in the United States and apply to practice in NYS, as long as the law school is approved by the American Bar Association, also known as the ABA. The ABA is the recognized national representative of the legal profession. Most American law schools award a JD (Juris Doctor) degree.

The following is a list of ABA approved law schools in NYS:

- Albany Law School (Albany, NY)
- Brooklyn Law School (Brooklyn, NY)
- CUNY School of Law (Flushing, NY)
- Columbia Law School (New York, NY)
- Cornell Law School (Ithaca, NY)
- Fordham University School of Law (New York, NY)
- Hofstra University School of Law (Hempstead, NY)
- New York University School of Law (New York, NY)
- Pace University School of Law (White Plains, NY)
- Saint John's University School of Law (Queens, NY)
- State University of New York at Buffalo (Buffalo, NY)
- Syracuse University College of Law (Syracuse, NY)
- Touro College Law Center (Central Islip, NY)
- Yeshiva University Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law (New York, NY)
- New York Law School (New York, NY)

WHAT IS NEXT AFTER GRADUATION FROM LAW SCHOOL?

After graduation from an approved law school, you are still not an attorney. You are technically only a law-school graduate with a JD degree. Graduating from law school, in and of itself, does not qualify you to practice law. The New York Judiciary Law § 478 makes it unlawful for anyone to practice, appear, or hold themselves out to be an attorney, lawyer, or counselor-at-law without first being duly authorized. So, how does one become duly authorized? To actually become an attorney, the law school graduate must decide in what state(s) he/she wishes to practice law and must submit to a professional qualifying test known as the Bar Exam in that state/those states. Passing this exam ultimately qualifies the law school graduate the right to practice law in that given state. As of July 2016, New York State is now administering the Uniform Bar Exam, which is also called the UBE.

The UBE is administered on the last Tuesday and Wednesday of February and July. During the morning session on Tuesday, applicants are given three hours to complete two Multistate Performance Test (MPT) items. During the afternoon session on Tuesday, applicants are given three hours to answer six Multistate Essay Exam (MEE) questions. On Wednesday, applicants will take the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE), which is a six-hour, 200 question multiple-choice exam divided into two 3-hour sessions. The passing score for the exam varies from state to state. In NYS, the passing score is 266 out of a 400-point scale. The score is transferable between states that also administer the UBE. As of May 2018, there are 31 states and US territories that have adopted the UBE. The remaining states have their own individual bar exams.

After passing the UBE, there are several more hurdles left before a law school graduate can practice law in NYS. An applicant for admission in New York must also take and complete an online course in New York-specific law, known as the New York Law Course (NYLC), and must take and pass an online examination, known as the New York Law Exam (NYLE). Applicants must comply with the 50-hour pro bono service requirement. Applicants must also take and pass the Multistate Professional

Responsibility Examination (MPRE). Additionally, applicants who commence their law school studies after August 1, 2016 must comply with the Skills Competency Requirement. Finally, applicants must satisfy the character and fitness requirements by appearing before the committee on character and fitness. If one has a felony conviction, that will be a disqualifier.

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