

State Bar of California Admissions Fees Final Proposal

In April 2023, the State Bar circulated for public comment two options for increasing admissions fees, that is, fees related to the Bar Exam, the First Year Law Students' Exam, law school regulation, the Multijurisdictional Practice Program, and other special admissions programs. (Those two previous options are shown in these materials for comparison).

The Board of Trustees considered the themes raised in the public comment alongside the significant budget crisis the State Bar is currently facing with regard to the Admissions function to help provide direction on how to proceed. The Board expressed strong support for ensuring that the fee structure fully supports what it takes to operate the Admissions function. The current fee structure substantially underfunds the function, and the State Bar no longer has the resources to supplement the revenue.

The Board strongly favored Option 1, as it aimed to largely match revenue and expenditures to ensure that fees covered the costs of providing services. What you see on the tabs that follow is a revised proposal following the parameters set by the Board. The fee increases displayed here will be presented to the Board for final consideration in September 2023. The fee increases recommended, coupled with planned cost reductions and efficiencies, are necessary to stabilize the budget and ensure that appropriate resources are available to perform the critical work of the Office of Admissions.

Law Study and Exams

The fees for law study and exams have generally not been increased for seven years, while the costs of operating the functions and administering the exams have increased significantly. The proposed fees below include higher increases for applicants who are already licensed attorneys in order to reduce the fee increase impact on students and nonattorney applicants. (Previous option 1 and 2 provided for reference only.)

Program	Category	Current Fee	Last Increase	Previous Option 1	Previous Option 2	Proposed New Fee	% Increase
Registration	Student Registration	\$ 119	2016	\$ 150	\$ 150	\$ 150	26%
	Attorney Registration	\$ 214	2016	\$ 300	\$ 250	\$ 300	40%
Bar Exam	Student Application	\$ 677	2016	\$ 878	\$ 745	\$ 850	36%
	Attorney Application	\$ 983	2016	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,500	53%
	Test Center Change	\$ 15		\$ 100	\$ 25	\$ 60	300%
First Year Law Students' Exam	Application	\$ 624	2016	\$ 1,850	\$ 685	\$ 850	36%
	FYLSX writer/laptop change	\$ 15	2016	\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ 50	233%
Moral Character Determination	Application (student/nonattorney)	\$ 551	2016	\$ 795	\$ 575	\$ 725	32%
	Application (attorney)	\$ 551	2016	\$ 1,000	\$ 675	\$ 850	54%
	Extension (student/nonattorney)	\$ 265	2016	\$ 375	\$ 275	\$ 290	9%
	Extension (attorney)	\$ 265	2016	\$ 500	\$ 375	\$ 400	51%
Practical Training of Law Students	Application	\$ 55	2015	\$ 60		\$ 60	9%
	Request to Change	\$ 25	2015	\$ 30		\$ 30	20%
Law Office Study	Notice of Intent	\$ 158	2016	\$ 880		\$ 880	457%
	Semi-annual reports	\$ 105	2016	\$ 525		\$ 525	400%

Attorney Special Admissions

Most of these fees have not been considered for many years. The proposal below seeks to allocate the costs to those who, on average, have a greater ability to pay and, consistent with the goals of the State Bar strategic plan, to incentivize participation in the Registered Legal Aid Program and the Registered Military Spouse Program. Increased amounts in several cases align with other states' parallel fees.

Program	Category	Current Fee	Last Increase	Previous Proposed Fee	Proposed New Fee	% Increase
Multijurisdictional Practice	Application for Registered In-House Counsel	\$ 635	2016	\$ 1,075	\$ 1,075	69%
	Application for Legal Aid Attorney	\$ 635	2016	\$ 500	\$ 500	-21%
	Application for Military Spouse Attorney	\$ 635	2019	\$ 500	\$ 500	-21%
Out of State Attorney Arbitration Counsel	Application	\$ 50	pre-2014	\$ 500	\$ 500	900%
Pro Hac Vice	Application	\$ 50	pre-2014	\$ 500	\$ 500	900%
Foreign Legal Consultants	Application	\$ 370	pre-2014	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	170%
	Renewal	\$ 497	pre-2014	\$ 600	\$ 600	21%
	Late Renewal	\$ 100	pre-2014	\$ 150	\$ 150	50%

Law School Regulation

For context, we have calculated what the average per-student increase would be if the increased costs of the Annual Report and Inspections were to be passed through from the school to the students. For registered schools, the impact was assessed across all school sizes, since at this time almost all schools fall in category B. (Previous option 1 and 2 provided for reference only.)

Program	Category	Current Fee	Last Increase	Previous Option 1	Previous Option 2	Proposed New Fee	Average Per Student Impact*
California Accredited Law Schools	CALS Annual Report	\$ 2,170	2018	\$ 22,900	\$ 2,800	\$ 22,900	\$ 224
	CALS Inspection* (1/5 of 5 yr base)	\$ 4,400		\$ 8,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 39
Registered Unaccredited Law Schools	Annual A (max 19 students)	\$ 725	2018	\$ 6,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 5,000	
	Annual B (max 199 students)	\$ 1,090		\$ 9,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 7,500	\$ 176
	Annual C (> 200 students)	\$ 1,445		\$ 12,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 10,000	
	Inspection A (1/5 of 5 yr flat)	\$ 1,385		\$ 6,000	\$ 1,600	\$ 4,500	
	Inspection B (1/5 of 5 yr flat)	\$ 1,800		\$ 7,000	\$ 2,200	\$ 6,000	\$ 117
	Inspection C (1/5 of 5 yr flat)	\$ 2,200		\$ 8,000	\$ 2,800	\$ 7,250	
	* Professional Services (hourly)	\$ 275		\$ 350	\$ 350	\$ 350	

* Based on data report by law schools in the 2022 Annual Report, submitted December 2022