



Republic of the Philippines

Supreme Court

Manila

EN BANC

SUPREME COURT OF THE PHILIPPINES  
P. I. O. / COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

RECEIVED  
OCT 16 2025

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

A.M. No. 24-10-05-SC

**RE: 2025 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RULE 138 OF THE  
RULES OF COURT**

### **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Article VIII, Section 5(5) of the 1987 Constitution, the Supreme Court is vested with the exclusive authority to promulgate rules concerning admission to the practice of law,<sup>1</sup> including the administration of the bar examinations;

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to this authority vested by the Constitution, the Court promulgated Rule 138 of the Rules of Court, which provides for the qualifications, requirements, and procedures for bar applicants who are taking the bar examinations;

**WHEREAS**, the Supreme Court, in conjunction with the Asia Foundation and the U.P. Law Center, conducted the 2019 National Legal Education Summit from July 31 to August 1, 2019, at the Manila Hotel and identified and discussed the different issues confronting the legal education sector;

**WHEREAS**, one of the proposals during the summit was the revision of the coverage of the bar examinations, including their regionalization and digitalization;

**WHEREAS**, a Technical Working Group (TWG) under the Subcommittee on the Admission to the Bar was created on August 15, 2019, composed of Associate Justice Ramon Paul L. Hernando as Chairperson, then Court of Appeals Associate Justice Maria Filomena D. Singh as Working Vice Chairperson, justices from the Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan, and Court of Tax Appeals, representatives from the Legal Education Board, Philippine Judicial Academy, and deans of law schools as

<sup>1</sup> CONST., art. VIII, sec. 5(5).

members, to study the proposals from the National Legal Education Summit extensively and to submit recommendations to the Subcommittee on the Admission to the Bar;

**WHEREAS**, the TWG, which extensively studied the proposals from the National Legal Education Summit and submitted its recommendations to the Subcommittee on the Admission to the Bar, was composed of the following members:

**Chairperson:**           **Hon. Ramon Paul L. Hernando**  
*Associate Justice*  
Supreme Court of the Philippines

**Working Vice**           **Hon. Maria Filomena D. Singh**  
**Chairperson:**           *Associate Justice*  
Court of Appeals

**Members:**           **Hon. Pablito A. Perez**  
*Associate Justice*  
Court of Appeals

**Hon. Ma. Theresa Dolores C. Gomez-Estoesta**  
*Associate Justice*  
Sandiganbayan

**Hon. Maria Rowena Modesto-San Pedro**  
*Associate Justice*  
Court of Tax Appeals

**Hon. Josefe Sorrrera-Ty**  
*Commissioner*  
Legal Education Board

**Dean Sedfrey M. Candelaria**  
*Head, Research, Publication and Linkages*  
Philippine Judicial Academy

**Dean Jason R. Barlis**  
*Saint Louis University*

**Vice Dean Marianne Elizabeth B. Angeles**  
*Angeles University Foundation*

**Dean Nilo T. Divina**  
*University of Santo Tomas*

**Dean Fides Cordero-Tan**  
*University of the Philippines*

**Dean Virgilio De Los Reyes**  
*De La Salle University*

**Dean Jose Maria Hofileña**  
*Ateneo de Manila University*

**Dean Marciano Delson**  
*San Beda University*

**Dean Joan S. Largo**  
*University of San Carlos*

**Dean J.P. Villasor**  
*University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos*

**Dean Alizedney Ditucalan**  
*Mindanao State University*

**Dean Silvia Jo G. Sabio**  
*Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan*

**Prof. Victoria V. Loanzon**  
*University of the Philippines*

**Atty. Charisma I. Nolasco**  
**Atty. Rigor R. Pascual**  
*Supreme Court of the Philippines*

**Consultants:**

**Atty. Carolyn Mercado**  
*The Asia Foundation*

**Dean Cynthia R. Del Castillo**  
*Ateneo de Manila University*

**Atty. Ma. Cristina B. Layusa**  
*Bar Confidant*

**Secretariat:**

**Atty. Gracielle M. Tejada-Mendoza**  
*Office of Associate Justice Alexander G.  
Gesmundo*

**Atty. Fatima C. Garcia-Yap**  
**Ms. Veronica D. Cruz**  
*The Asia Foundation*

**WHEREAS**, following a series of meetings and writeshops, the TWG finalized and submitted its 2022 Proposed Amendments to Rule 138 of the Rules of Court;

**WHEREAS**, the Court, in a Resolution issued on July 19, 2022 concerning Bar Matter No. 3978, approved salient academic and procedural reforms for the 2023 Bar Examinations, including the (1) advancement of the schedule of the examinations from the month of November to September; (2) determination of six core subjects for which bar applicants will be tested on in three examination dates; and (3) engagement of four examiners per subject or a total of 24 examiners;

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 14 of Rule 138-A or the Law Student Practice Rule,<sup>2</sup> the completion of the Clinical Legal Education Program as a prescribed course to obtain a law degree shall be a requirement for bar examination applicants commencing in the 2023 Bar Examinations;

**WHEREAS**, in the exercise of its continuing authority to administer the bar examinations, the Court remains steadfast in evaluating and refining its institutional processes to ensure that the conduct of the examinations is not only fair and devoid of fraud or undue influence but also aligned with its commitment to institutionalizing reforms on inclusivity, regionalization, and digitalization;

**WHEREAS**, the Subcommittee on the Admission to the Bar was reorganized on August 13, 2024, composed of Associate Justice Ramon Paul L. Hernando as Chairperson, Associate Justice Rodil V. Zalameda and Associate Justice Maria Filomena D. Singh as Co-Vice Chairpersons, Associate Justice Jhosep Y. Lopez, Associate Justice Japar B. Dimaampao, Associate Justice Antonio T. Kho, Jr., and representatives from the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Office, Philippine Association of Law Schools, Integrated Bar of the Philippines, and deans of law schools as members, to incorporate these bar reforms and draft the amendments to Rule 138 of the Rules of Court;

**WHEREAS**, the Subcommittee on the Admission to the Bar (Subcommittee) is composed of the following members:

Chairperson: **Hon. Ramon Paul L. Hernando**  
*Associate Justice, Supreme Court*

Vice-  
Chairpersons: **Hon. Rodil V. Zalameda**  
*Associate Justice, Supreme Court*

**Hon. Maria Filomena D. Singh**  
*Associate Justice, Supreme Court*

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<sup>2</sup> A.M. No. 19-03-24-SC, June 25, 2019.

Members:

**Hon. Jhosep Y. Lopez**

*Associate Justice, Supreme Court*

**Hon. Japar B. Dimaampao**

*Associate Justice, Supreme Court*

**Hon. Antonio T. Kho, Jr.**

*Associate Justice, Supreme Court*

**Hon. Pablito A. Perez**

*Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*

**Hon. Germano Francisco D. Legaspi**

*Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*

**Hon. Ma. Theresa Dolores C. Gomez-Estoesta**

*Associate Justice, Sandiganbayan*

**Hon. Sarah Jane T. Fernandez**

*Associate Justice, Sandiganbayan*

**Dean Sedfrey M. Candelaria**

*Chairperson, MCLE Governing Board*

**Dean Teodoro A. Pastrana**

*President, Philippine Association of Law Schools*

**Dean Jose Maria G. Hofileña**

*Dean, Ateneo School of Law*

**Dean Marciano G. Delson**

*Dean, San Beda University*

**Dean Tranquil Gervacio S. Salvador III**

*Dean, Manila Adventist College School of Law*

**Atty. Antonio C. Pido**

*National President, Integrated Bar of the  
Philippines*

**Prof. Victoria V. Loanzon**

*Professor, University of the Philippines*

**Atty. Paul Rico G. Tan**

*Representative, Office of Chief Justice Alexander  
G. Gesmundo*

**Atty. Macario B. Manicad III**  
*Representative, Office of Associate Justice Rodil V. Zalameda*

**Atty. Neil G. Ortile**  
*Representative, Office of Associate Justice Antonio T. Kho, Jr.*

**Atty. Pamela Angela Antig-Aportadera**  
*Representative, Office of the Bar Confidant*

Secretariat: **Atty. Katrina Bianca Louise S. Diploma**  
*Office of Associate Justice Ramon Paul L. Hernando*

**Atty. Pauline Angela D. Carillo**  
*Office of Associate Justice Ramon Paul L. Hernando*

**Atty. Ma. Regine B. Callueng**  
*Office of Associate Justice Ramon Paul L. Hernando*

**Ms. Kenneth Marie J. Superiano**  
*Office of Associate Justice Ramon Paul L. Hernando*

**Atty. Yves Peter Carlo D. Medina**  
*Office of Associate Justice Rodil V. Zalameda*

**Atty. Aaron Marc M. Dimaano**  
*Office of Associate Justice Maria Filomena D. Singh*

**Ms. Nancy I. Calabio**  
*Stenographer, Office of Associate Justice Ramon Paul L. Hernando*

**Ms. Sarah Jane M. Truya**  
*Stenographer, Office of the Clerk of Court En Banc*

**WHEREAS**, in pursuit of institutionalizing innovations such as inclusivity, regionalization, and digitalization of the bar examinations, the Subcommittee convened its inaugural meeting on August 30, 2024, followed by a series of deliberations;

**WHEREAS**, after extensive deliberations and numerous meetings, the Subcommittee completed the draft amendments to Rule 138, taking into

account the Court's thrusts on efficiency and excellence through enhanced legal education and bar reforms under the Strategic Plan for Judicial Innovations 2022–2027;

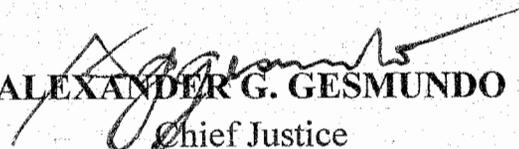
**WHEREAS**, the Subcommittee's secretariat circulated the draft of the proposed amendments to the Members of the Court *En Banc* on October 11, 2024, for their comments and subsequently extended the deadline to January 31, 2025, with several Members providing valuable feedback;

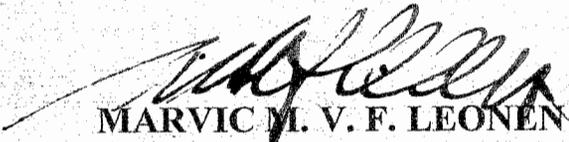
**WHEREAS**, after taking into account the additional inputs from the Members of the Court *En Banc*, the Subcommittee developed the final draft of the 2025 Proposed Amendments to Rule 138 of the Rules of Court;

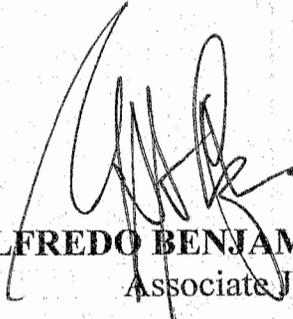
**NOW, THEREFORE**, acting on the recommendation of the Chairperson of the Subcommittee on the Admission to the Bar, the Court, sitting *en banc*, resolves to **ADOPT** and **APPROVE** the "2025 Amendments to Rule 138 of the Rules of Court."

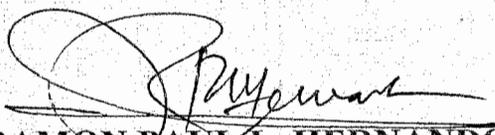
The 2025 Amendments to Rule 138 of the Rules of Court shall take effect on November 3, 2025, following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in two newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines. It shall also be uploaded to the websites of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and of the Supreme Court, through its Communications Office.

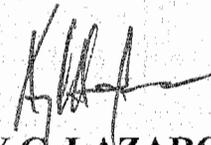
August 12, 2025, Manila, Philippines

  
**ALEXANDER G. GESMUNDO**  
Chief Justice

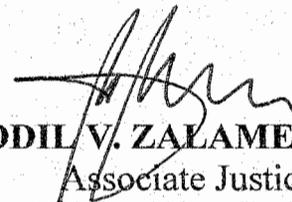
  
**MARVIC M. V. F. LEONEN**  
Associate Justice

  
**ALFREDO BENJAMIN S. CAGUIOA**  
Associate Justice

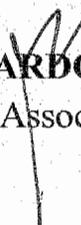
  
**RAMON PAUL L. HERNANDO**  
Associate Justice

  
**AMY C. LAZARO-JAVIER**  
Associate Justice

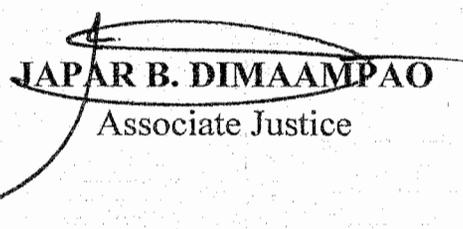
  
**HENRI JEAN PAUL B. INTING**  
Associate Justice

  
**RODIL V. ZALAMEDA**  
Associate Justice

  
**SAMUEL H. GAERLAN**  
Associate Justice

  
**RICARDO R. ROSARIO**  
Associate Justice

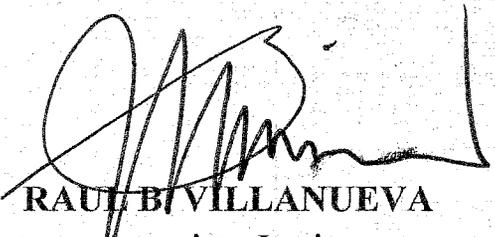
  
**JHOSEP Y. LOPEZ**  
Associate Justice

  
**JAPAR B. DIMAAMPAO**  
Associate Justice

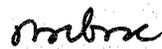
  
**JOSE MIDAS P. MARQUEZ**  
Associate Justice

  
**ANTONIO T. KHO, JR.**  
Associate Justice

(On Leave)  
**MARIA FILOMENA D. SINGH**  
Associate Justice

  
**RAUL B. VILLANUEVA**  
Associate Justice

**CERTIFIED TRUE COPY**

  
**MARIA CECILIA M. CAPUNPON**  
Deputy Clerk of Court and  
Executive Officer  
OCC-En Banc, Supreme Court

**2025 AMENDMENTS TO RULE 138 OF THE RULES OF COURT****Rule 138  
ADMISSION TO THE BAR**

**SECTION 1.** *Who may be admitted to the bar and practice law.* — No person shall be admitted to the bar who has not passed the bar examinations to be administered by the Supreme Court as provided in this Rule. (n)

The Supreme Court may require additional qualifications for the practice of law before it, or before any court with special jurisdiction. (n)

Any person who is duly admitted as a member of the bar in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the Rules of Court, and who remains in good and regular standing under the Code of Professional Responsibility and Accountability, may practice law. (138.1a)

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Supreme Court may allow other persons who are not members of the Philippine bar to practice law in a limited capacity. (n)

**SECTION 2.** *Essential requirements for all applicants for admission to the bar.* — Every applicant for admission as a member of the bar must be a citizen of the Philippines, of legal age, and must produce, before the Supreme Court, satisfactory evidence of good moral character, and that no charges involving moral turpitude have been decided with finality against the applicant in any court or tribunal in the Philippines or other jurisdiction. (138.2a)

An applicant must disclose any pending charges involving moral turpitude at the time of application. Such an applicant may conditionally take the examinations.

In the Supreme Court's assessment and sole discretion, considering the gravity of the claim or offense charged, any prior cases filed against the applicant, and similar reasons, the Supreme Court may defer the oath-taking of the concerned applicant, or impose any other preventive measures, as warranted.

**SECTION 3.** *Academic requirements of all applicants to take the bar examinations.* — (a) The applicant shall submit a verified certificate of completion of all the requirements of the law degree to be issued by a government-recognized law school where the applicant graduated. Prior to taking the lawyer's oath and after passing the bar examinations, the applicant shall also submit the official law degree transcript of records.

No applicant shall be admitted to the bar examinations unless he or she has satisfactorily completed the following courses in a law school or

university duly recognized by the Legal Education Board: Political Law and Public International Law, Commercial Law, Taxation Law, Civil Law and Land Titles and Deeds, Labor Law and Social Legislation, Criminal Law, Remedial Law, Legal and Judicial Ethics, and the mandatory Clinical Legal Education Program (CLEP).

(b) Applicant with a foreign law degree. — A Filipino citizen who graduated from a foreign law school shall, before being permitted to take the bar examinations, submit to the Supreme Court the following requirements:

(i) proof of completion of all courses leading to the degree of Juris Doctor or its equivalent law degree granted by a foreign law school;

(ii) proof of recognition or accreditation of the foreign law school by the proper authority in the foreign jurisdiction where the law degree has been granted; and (138.5a, 138.6a)

(iii) proof of completion of mandatory CLEP.

**SECTION 4.** *Time for filing the application to take the bar examinations and proof of qualifications.* — All applications to take the bar examinations, together with the evidence required by the foregoing Sections, shall be filed with the Office of the Bar Confidant within the time that may be prescribed by the Supreme Court. (138.7a)

**SECTION 5.** *List of qualified applicants who may take the bar examinations.* — The list of qualified applicants who may take the bar examinations shall be published by the Office of the Bar Confidant of the Supreme Court in the official Supreme Court website not later than fifteen (15) calendar days before the scheduled first day of the examinations. (138.8a)

**SECTION 6.** *Bar examinations; nature and governing principles.* — The bar examinations are qualifying licensure examinations for admission to the bar. Applicants taking the bar examinations shall be tested on their basic knowledge and skills in law and in ethics and their practice-readiness.

The Supreme Court declares as a policy that the bar examinations shall be inclusive, fair, and non-discriminatory. It shall grant equal access to admission to the bar. The integrity of the bar examinations must be ensured, and their conduct shall be efficient and technology-enabled. (n)

**SECTION 7.** *Examination subjects.* — Applicants shall be tested on the following subjects: (1) Political and Public International Law; (2) Labor Law and Social Legislation; (3) Civil Law and Land Titles and Deeds; (4) Commercial and Taxation Laws; (5) Criminal Law; and (6) Remedial Law, Legal and Judicial Ethics, with Practical Exercises.

**SECTION 8.** *Bar examinations in electronic form.* — Unless the Supreme Court otherwise directs, the bar examinations shall be administered by electronic means, using an appropriate, secure, and reliable assessment platform. The bar examinations shall be in the English language and shall be uniform for all examinees.

Examinees shall answer the questions personally without help from anyone. For examinees with special needs, the Bar Chairperson may issue separate guidelines to be included in the bar examination manual. (138.10a)

**SECTION 9.** *Annual examinations.* — The bar examinations shall take place annually in local testing centers across the Philippines, in such venues that the Supreme Court *En Banc* may designate.

The bar examinations shall be held in the month of September for three (3) days, as designated by the Supreme Court.

The subjects shall be distributed as follows:

First Day: Political and Public International Law (morning) and Commercial and Taxation Laws (afternoon);

Second Day: Civil Law and Land Titles and Deeds (morning) and Labor Law and Social Legislation (afternoon); and

Third Day: Criminal Law (morning) and Remedial Law, Legal and Judicial Ethics, with Practical Exercises (afternoon).

**SECTION 10.** *Passing average.* — In order that an applicant may be deemed to have passed the examinations successfully, an applicant must have obtained a general average of 75% in all subjects, unless the Court *En Banc* determines another passing rate.

In determining the average, the subjects in the examination shall be given the following relative weights:

Political and Public International Law, 15%; Commercial and Taxation Laws, 20%; Civil Law and Land Titles and Deeds, 20%; Labor Law and Social Legislation, 10%; Criminal Law, 10%; and Remedial Law, Legal and Judicial Ethics, with Practical Exercises, 25%.

**SECTION 11.** *Bar examination manual.* — In consultation with the association of law schools and other relevant stakeholders, the formulation of the bar syllabi, the type of tests or questions, the rules of conduct, test procedures, offenses, and penalties related to the bar examinations shall be embodied in the bar examination manual. (n)

**SECTION 12.** *Committee of examiners.* — Examinations shall be conducted by a committee of bar examiners appointed by the Supreme Court. The committee of bar examiners shall be composed of a justice of the Supreme Court, who shall act as chairperson, and such number of members of the bar of the Philippines in good standing, as may be determined by the bar chairperson. The duties and functions of the chairperson and the bar examiners are defined in the bar examination manual. The names of the members of this committee shall remain confidential until the official release of the examination results. (138.12a)

**SECTION 13.** *Undue influence; disciplinary action.* — No applicant shall endeavor to influence, directly or indirectly, any official or employee of the Office of the Bar Chairperson, any member of the committee of examiners, or any personnel of the Office of the Bar Confidant.

During the examinations, the applicant shall not cheat or commit any act of dishonesty and shall sign an Honor Code to reflect this undertaking.

The applicant who violates this provision, or any other provision of this rule, shall be barred from the examinations and may be subjected to further disciplinary action, including permanent disqualification. (138.13a)

**SECTION 14.** *Report of the committee.* — Within the time that may be prescribed by the Supreme Court, the committee shall file its report on the results of the examinations with the Clerk of Court. (138.15a)

**SECTION 15.** *Review course.* — An applicant who has not passed the bar examinations three times, and on every third unsuccessful attempt thereafter, shall not be allowed to take the bar unless they show to the satisfaction of the Court that they have enrolled anew and passed regular fourth-year review classes, as well as attended a pre-bar review course in a recognized law school.

Those required to take the fourth-year review course shall be required to complete the same within a maximum period of four (4) consecutive semesters beginning their initial enrollment; and those who have completed their fourth-year review course shall be given a maximum of three (3) bar years within which to take the bar examinations.

The dean or any authorized school official shall certify under oath that the applicant has passed the subjects under the same conditions as regular students and the ratings obtained by them in the particular subject.

Before the examinations, a certification issued by the law school of the applicant that the latter is currently enrolled in the review classes, coupled with an affidavit of the applicant that he or she undertakes to subsequently enroll in a pre-bar review course, shall suffice and be submitted as evidence of the aforesaid facts.

**SECTION 16.** *Admission and oath of successful applicants.* — An applicant who has passed the required examinations or has been otherwise found to be eligible for admission to the bar, and after submission of the complete documentary requirements outlined in the preceding sections, shall take and subscribe to the corresponding oath of office before the Supreme Court or, with its prior approval, before any member thereof.

**SECTION 17.** *Duty to provide accurate and complete information and disclose cases filed against an applicant.* — An applicant shall undertake to declare only true, correct, and complete information that is within their personal knowledge in filing a petition to take the bar examinations.

Any applicant, against whom a case is filed after completing the bar examinations but before the release of the examination results, shall inform the Supreme Court in a sworn statement about the details of the said case within five (5) calendar days from notice. The requirement in this paragraph similarly applies to any applicant who passed the bar examinations but against whom a case is filed after the release of the examination results but before the applicant takes the Lawyer's Oath and signs the Roll of Attorneys.

In the Supreme Court's assessment and sole discretion, considering the gravity of the claim or offense charged, any prior cases filed against the applicant, and similar reasons, the Supreme Court may defer the oath-taking of the concerned applicant, or impose any other preventive measures, as warranted. (n)

In any case, any false or inaccurate information, concealment or failure to disclose, or misrepresentation on the part of an applicant shall be a ground for either the denial of the application, disqualification from taking the examinations, or delisting from the list of passers, depending on the stage of discovery, and without prejudice to other disciplinary sanctions that the Supreme Court may impose.

**SECTION 18.** *Certificate of Admission.* — The Supreme Court shall admit the successful applicant in Section 16 as a member of the bar and order the issuance of a certificate of admission to the bar. (138.18a)

**SECTION 19.** *Attorneys' Roll.* — The Office of the Bar Confidant shall keep a Roll of Attorneys of successful applicants admitted to the Philippine bar. (138.19a)