AILF INSIGHTS · STUDENTS AND COLLEGES

From graduate to advocate: enrolment and the All India Bar Examination

The steps from a law degree to practice in India: enrolling with a State Bar Council, the All India Bar Examination and the certificate of practice.

A law degree does not by itself entitle a person to practise. Under the Advocates Act, 1961, only an advocate enrolled with a State Bar Council may practise the profession of law. Here is the path from graduation to the first appearance.

Step one: enrol with a State Bar Council

Apply to the Bar Council of the State where you intend to practise. You will need your degree and mark sheets from a college approved by the Bar Council of India, proof of identity and age, and the prescribed forms and declarations. Once enrolled, your name is entered on the State roll, and you may practise throughout India.

Enrolment fees

In 2024 the Supreme Court held that State Bar Councils cannot charge enrolment fees beyond those the Advocates Act prescribes. This matters for graduates of limited means. Check the current fee schedule of your State Bar Council.

Step two: the All India Bar Examination

The Bar Council of India conducts the All India Bar Examination to assess whether a new advocate has the basic knowledge and analytical ability needed for practice. It applies to law graduates from the academic year 2009–10 onwards. Passing it leads to the certificate of practice.

What it covers. Core subjects from the law course: constitutional law, the criminal laws, civil procedure, evidence, contract, family law, professional ethics and others listed in the syllabus.

Format. Multiple-choice questions. Check the latest notification for the pass mark, permitted materials and languages, as these have changed over the years.

How to prepare

- Know the bare Acts well, including the criminal laws that came into force in 2024.
- Solve previous papers under time limits.
- Revise professional ethics and Bar Council rules.
- Begin early. Do not treat the examination as a formality.

Step three: begin practice

- Join the chamber of a senior or a law firm.
- Become a member of the Bar association of the court where you practise.
- Obtain your identity card and learn the court's filing systems, including e-filing.
- Follow the dress code and rules of conduct from the first day.

Other things to know

- Advocates must comply with the rules on verification of their certificate and place of practice.
- A person in full-time salaried employment generally cannot practise as an advocate, with limited exceptions.
- Welfare schemes for advocates differ from State to State.

The first years

They are demanding everywhere. Choose a senior who teaches. Read every file you are given. Be present in court. The reputation you build in the first five years lasts a career.

Association of Indian Law Firms · November 2026
Read online: https://indianlawfirmsassociation.com/aibe-and-enrolment-how-to-become-an-advocate/

Keywords: All India Bar Examination, AIBE, Bar Council enrolment, how to become an advocate in India
Published by the Association of Indian Law Firms. General information only; not legal advice.