

## Practice Questions: Why, When, and How

### Why should I do practice questions and hypos?

- Practice and testing are highly effective learning methods while passively reviewing information is not
- Practice tests not only help assess what you have learned, they also help you *learn* new material and *retain* it
- Remember that you will be tested on both your knowledge of the rules *and* your ability to apply those rules using legal analysis
- Doing practice questions helps you learn the rules *and* practice legal analysis at the same time

### When should I start doing practice questions and how should I approach them?

- Start practicing early and often, long before you have finished reviewing and outlining
- Think of practice questions as a way to learn the information, not as a test of whether you have already learned it
- Be sure to write out your answer in complete sentences, just as you would on an exam
- When you are still learning the rules, work through practice questions slowly
- Later in the semester, do timed practices to simulate exam conditions

### I just keep putting off and avoiding practice questions...

Reflect on the root cause (“why am I avoiding this task?”) and tend to it with self-compassion and without judgment:

- Anxiety about not being “good enough” or fear of failure
  - Be kind to yourself and talk to yourself as you would talk to a friend
  - Adopt a growth mindset: law school exams are a skill that you can learn with practice
  - Lower your expectations and allow your practice attempts to be terrible—the most important thing is to just start doing it
  - Ignoring exams won’t make them go away; the best way to prepare for something is to actually do it
  - Seek support from Student Services, ASP faculty, your ASP fellow, and/or Berkeley Law and campus staff psychologists
- Confusion about how to do it or where to start
  - Be kind to yourself and talk to yourself as you would talk to a friend
  - Get help and guidance from an ASP faculty member, the Senior ASP Fellow, or your mod’s ASP Fellow
  - Break the task down into manageable pieces:
    1. Spot the issues and write them down

2. For each issue, identify and write down the relevant rules
3. For each issue, identify and write down all of the relevant facts
4. Using complete sentences and concrete details, explain why the facts lead to one outcome or the other
5. State your conclusion

### **How can I assess my performance on practice questions and learn from them?**

- To see where your organization needs work, go through your answer sentence by sentence and highlight each part of IRAC in a different color
- Then focus on the application section:
  - Did you discuss all of the relevant facts in detail?
  - Did you explain *why* the facts support your conclusion?
  - Did you address counterarguments or is your analysis one-sided?
- Exchange and compare answers with a friend
- Schedule a meeting with an ASP faculty member or the Senior ASP Fellow
- If you have a sample answer, compare your answer to the sample answer:
  - Did you spot the same issues?
  - Did you identify the same rules?
  - Did you discuss the same facts? (Details are important here.)
  - Did you reach the same conclusions? If not, could reasonable minds differ or did you miss something?

### **Where can I find practice questions?**

You can find resources for practice questions on [the Academic Skills Program website](#).