

# Law reform essay competition

The winners have been announced.

**The competition at a glance:**

- Winners
- What it is, prizes and who can enter
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- Rules and eligibility criteria
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- Past winners

## In this section

**Becoming a barrister**

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I am a university student or graduate

I am trying to secure a pupillage

**I am a pupil barrister**

**Law reform essay competition**

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Pupil Helpline

Funding and scholarships

Inns of Court events and schemes

Immigration Support for Pupil Barristers

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## Winners and runners-up for 2025

Read this year's winning essay, plus all the highly commended and the runner-up's essays.

**Read the winning essays**

## What is the law reform essay competition?

Our essay competition gives you the opportunity to make the case for law reform in English, Welsh and European law.

Law reform can lead to significant changes in society by updating laws to reflect current values, addressing injustices, and improving the efficiency of the legal system.

Got an idea for reform to legislation or common law? We're looking for you to identify and make the case for law reform that improves efficiency and enhances justice. We encourage you to review how effective, fair and relevant legislation is for today's society.

## Why enter?

Our essay competition gives you the opportunity to explore reforming English, Welsh and European law. Written advocacy, such as making the case for law reform, is an essential skill you'll need to develop throughout your career at the Bar.

There are generous prizes which can contribute to funding your training for the Bar.

**What you could win:**

- The winner will receive £4,000 and their essay will be published on Counsel magazine's website
- Runner up: £3,000
- Highly commended award x4: £750
- All winning, runner up and highly commended essays will be published on our website and shared via our social media channels

The prize money is funded by the Bar Council Scholarship Trust.

## Who can enter?

## Who can enter?

You can enter our essay competition if you:

- Are undertaking pupillage
- Hold a pupillage offer
- Are undertaking the vocational component of Bar training
- Have completed the vocational component of Bar training and are actively seeking pupillage

In a change to previous years, university students are no longer eligible to enter our competition. Our new eligibility criteria align with our aims to support aspiring barristers to the Bar and encourage an interest in law reform. We'd welcome your entry when you've started vocational training such as the Bar training course.

Check our eligibility criteria

## Timeline

| Competition opens | Competition closes | Essays reviewed | Winners announced |
|---|---|---|---|
| 29 July 2025 | 23 October 2025 at 5.00pm | November to December 2025 | December 2025 |

## Tips

**Topics** | How to format your essay | Referencing guide | Use of generative AI

Previous winning topics include:

- Single justice procedure offences should be moved to the civil jurisdiction
- A proposed AI transparency framework for the UK
- Why mediation should be compulsory in all civil disputes
- A proposal for drug consumption rooms in the UK
- Fair remuneration for employer-contracted sleep
- Introducing a summary procedure for the dismissal of unmeritorious claims in the Arbitration Act 1996

Read previous winning and runner up essays

Consider different practice areas you might want to focus on:

- Chancery/commercial
- Criminal
- Employment
- Family
- Human rights
- Financial
- International/EU
- Public law (including parliamentary, administrative and constitutional law)
- Medical negligence/personal injury
- Environment
- Intellectual property
- Technology

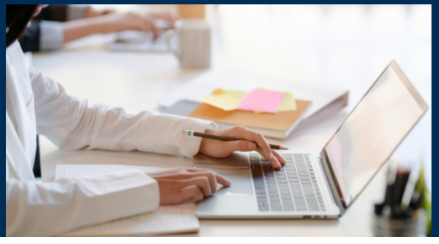
Or you can choose other practice areas.

**Make sure you read the full competition rules** →

## More about the competition









## Winners of the 2025 competition

Read the winning essays from 2025's Law reform essay competition.



## Past winners

See the previous winners of the law reform essay competition.



## The competition rules

Check you're eligible and understand the competition rules

# Frequently asked questions

## Eligibility

Can I enter the competition if I have completed my undergraduate studies or GDL/PGDL conversion course in the academic year 2024/2025 and have accepted to start the Bar course in January 2026? ↓

## Format

What is the word count limit? ↓

Are footnotes included in the word count limit? ↓

How should I submit my essay? ↓

Do you have any requirements for font or style? ↓

Do you need a bibliography submitted with the essay? ↓

Should I include the essay title on my essay? ↓

Should I include my name on my essay? ↓

Can I choose any topic to identify and make a case for law reform? ↓

Do you have a past example of a winning entry for reference? ↓

Can I use ChatGPT or other generative AI tools when conducting research for my essay? ↓

Can I enter an essay which has been produced with another individual(s)? ↓

I've written an essay that I've entered into other competitions, can I use it to enter this competition?

I want to amend some of my essay but have already submitted it. Will you accept an amended version of my essay?

## Topic help

Can I choose any topic to identify and make a case for law reform?

Do you have a past example of a winning entry for reference?

## Original work

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## Post competition

Can the judges provide feedback on my essay?

Can I win two prizes for the same essay?

If I win, can I refer to the achievement on my CV, applications or LinkedIn?

Who makes the final decision on the prize winners?

The Bar Council
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