



The 2023 Law Reform Essay Competition Rules

1. When the essay is submitted and at the date of the close of the competition, the applicant must satisfy **one or more** of the following criteria:

a) A person who is undertaking a pupillage, as defined in the [Bar Qualification Manual](#) of the Bar Standards Board (see Section 4A in particular), which is registered with the Bar Standards Board. **Please note:** Pupils undertaking a third six pupillage or probationary tenancy (or howsoever termed) are not eligible. An applicant who met the eligibility criteria at the time of submitting their essay who commences tenancy before the deadline has closed will remain eligible to enter.

b) A person who holds an offer of such a pupillage registered in the years 2023-2025.

c) A person who:

- i. is undertaking the academic component of training for the Bar. This means currently study for a degree in law or undertaking the Graduate Diploma in Law course (or other conversion course) during the academic session 2022/23, or will be doing so during the academic session 2023/24. We will accept essay entries from applicants whose academic course has started in January 2023. The academic component must be a law degree that satisfies the academic component of Bar training ([see Sections 2A and 2B](#)) ahead of undertaking the vocational component of training for the Bar. The applicant must also have a settled intention to become a practising member of the Bar of England and Wales; or
- ii. is undertaking the vocational component of training for the Bar with an [Authorised Education and Training Organisation](#) during the academic session 2022/23 or will be doing so during the academic session 2023/24; or
- iii. is in the process of transferring to the Bar, as demonstrated by (for example) completion of, or enrolment on, the Bar Transfer Test; or

iv. is undertaking an integrated academic and vocational course with an Authorised Education and Training Organisation as recognised by the Bar Standards Board, during the academic session 2022/23, or will be doing so during the academic session 2023/24 with a settled intention to become a practising member of the Bar of England and Wales.

d) A person who is actively seeking pupillage and are eligible to do pupillage having completed the vocational component (e.g. the Bar Course, the Bar/Barrister Training Course, the Bar Practice Course, the Bar Vocational Course, the Bar Vocational Studies or Bar Professional Training Course within the last five years).

Please note:

- Law degrees and conversion courses must comply with the Bar Standards Board's requirements, [please refer to the Bar Standards Board website](#).
- Master's degrees (other than the GDL) do not automatically form part of the academic component of training for the Bar, unless it is combined with the academic or vocational component. Accordingly, undertaking a Master's degree does not render a person eligible to enter.

2. Essays should identify and make the case for a law reform that is desirable, practical and useful. Essays must be about a reform to English, Welsh or European law. The proposed reform presented in the essay can be legislative or a proposal to a reform to English common law.

3. Essays should be submitted in a Word document in an attachment to an email to LawReform@BarCouncil.org.uk. The essay must include a word count at the foot of the essay.

Essays must be of **no more than 3000 words**, typed in Arial size 12, with clear references and in double line spacing. The 3000 words includes the main body of the essay but excludes the title and the footnotes, provided that the footnotes are no more than 25 words. Any individual footnotes of more than 25 words will be included in the word count. Any annexes submitted will be included as part of the word count. References should be inserted using the Harvard style referencing system or OSCOLA Referencing System. **Essays that are more than 3000 words will not be accepted.**

4. Handwritten essays will not be accepted. A bibliography is not required though there must be clear citation using footnotes/references. Please see the plagiarism section for more information. **The title of the essay must be included on the submitted essay, but the applicant's name must not be included on the essay. The essays are kept anonymised for marking and separated from the application forms.**

5. The essay must be the sole creation and original work of the entrant. Entrants are not permitted to use any AI programme, including ChatGPT, to write an essay to enter this competition. Any essay entered into the competition written by ChatGPT will be automatically excluded from the marking and judging process. The essay must not have been submitted to this or any other essay competition in previous years. Entrants must not submit an essay which is in substance the same as one submitted in a previous year. Guidance on plagiarism is attached; any form of plagiarism will result in automatic disqualification.

6. An essay may be a reworked piece of the entrant's course work provided that it was originally the sole creation of the entrant. If an essay entry is an extension of a journal or article written by the entrant, this will only be accepted if it is originally the sole creation of the entrant and it has not been peer reviewed and edited.

7. Entries must be approved by the entrant's Pupil Supervisor or Academic Supervisor, whose signature is to warrant that the entrant falls within the appropriate category of entrant. If the entrant is submitting an essay under (d), entrants must submit the essay with a signature from their previous Academic Supervisor or Tutor from the Bar Course. If this is not possible, the entrant should contact LawReform@BarCouncil.org.uk with evidence that they completed the relevant Bar Course, as specified under (d), within the last 5 years with a copy of the entrant's certificate showing completion of the course.

8. Prizes will only be awarded when the academic section is completed and the Bar Council has received an academic reference/certificate as appropriate in accordance with rule 7. The Bar Council will contact the Academic/Pupil Supervisors of the prize winners to confirm that the applicant is eligible under rule 1 before any prize money is released to the winners.

9. No person may submit more than one essay for each annual competition. No person who has won any prize in a previous year of the competition may enter again.

10. The award winners grant the Bar Council the right to publish or reproduce at any time all or part of the award-winning entries.

11. Entrants cannot win more than one prize in any one year. The award of all or any of the prizes lies solely within the discretion of the judges. The judges' decision will be final.

12. The deadline for the receipt of entries is **17:00 on Monday 23 October 2023** to LawReform@BarCouncil.org.uk. **Late entries will not be accepted. New versions of essay entries already submitted will not be accepted past the deadline.**

13. Entrants may complete their form by filling in the fields by hand/on a computer. The letters must be written block capitals. The form must be signed (either by hand/electronically) by entrants and supervisors.

14. We will inform all entrants of whether they have been successful or unsuccessful. Please note that we unfortunately do not have capacity to provide feedback on unsuccessful entries.

15. Winners are entitled to refer to the achievement on their CV.

16. The decision of the Chair or a Vice-Chair of the Law Reform Committee of the Bar Council on the interpretation of these Rules will be final.