The 2018 Write On Competition, mandatory for all first-year students seeking membership on a law journal, is scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m. EDT on May 18, 2018.

The Office of Journal Administration (OJA) oversees the annual Write On Competition. Students who wish to compete must purchase the rights to the online competition packet. The competition packet is a closed packet: students participating in the competition may only consult the packet materials (and the Bluebook) while writing their own competition paper. The materials include cases, scholarly commentary, and popular commentary. Some journals may also require a separate "personal statement" in which the candidate describes how the journal might benefit from his or her membership.

Although the competition itself does not begin until May 18, students will be able to purchase rights to the competition packet through the Write On website beginning on or about May 11, 2018. Once a student purchases these rights, he or she will receive a "Packet ID" number. This number, along with an "Exam Number" assigned to all first-year students by the Registrar’s Office, will serve to identify competitors in the otherwise anonymous competition.

Beginning on May 18, participating students may log on to the Write On website to examine and download the competition material. The website will remain open until 8:00 p.m. EDT on May 31, 2018. At that point, participants will need to have completed and returned their competition papers to the Office of Journal Administration and the competition will be considered closed.

Students will be able to preference journals when the competition opens; the preferencing part of the Write On site will remain open through mid-July so that students may take their first-year grades into account.

Results should be announced in late July, 2018.

HOW MANY JOURNALS CAN I TRY TO JOIN?


Participants in the Write On Competition indicate the journal(s) for which they wish to be considered by ranking those journals on the preferencing section of the Write On website. The preferencing area of the website will be open May 18th through early July, 2018 (deadline will be announced via e-mail).

Each journal will announce its criteria before the start of the competition. For example, the Georgetown Law Journal will only consider students who preference it as their first choice. For more detailed information that may be useful while you are preferencing the journals, please download the Journals Comparison Chart from gtllwriteon.org. Please see the question below, “Are there any strategies I can follow to increase my chances of being accepted to a journal?” for tips on preferencing.
Please attend one of the Journal Town Hall meetings this spring for more details. The dates (1) April 4 (3:30 – 4:30, Hart Auditorium) and (2) April 4 following Professor Fleming’s Contracts class. An audio recording of the Hart town hall is available online at gtlwriteon.org.

**WHAT DOES THE COMPETITION REQUIRE ME TO DO?**

The Write On Competition requires you to write a case comment using only materials provided in the online packet, available from the site for $40. You must also complete a bluebooking test, and some journals require the submission of separate personal statements and/or resumes.

We have posted a set of sample instructions, a sample case comment, and a list of the materials from the 2017 competition online at gtlwriteon.org. For a set of sample instructions and a list of the materials from a previous competition, please see here. Please note: instructions are provided for informational purposes only and are subject to change.

During the Write On Competition period, students must rely entirely upon the materials provided in the packet, plus the following sources: a dictionary, a law dictionary, a thesaurus, and the 20th Edition of the Bluebook. Students may not refer to any other materials during the Write On period unless those materials are included in the packet. Students may neither discuss the contents of the packet with anyone during the Write On period, nor may they receive editing or proof-reading assistance. While writing, students may use a spell-check and grammar-check.

**HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO COMPLETE THE WRITE ON?**

The Write On packet is designed to be completed in five to seven days. The competition, however, runs for longer — from May 18 to May 31, 2018. This period includes two full weekends. Your completed packet must be returned to OJA by the deadline. The Competition database will close at 8:00 p.m. EDT on May 31, 2018.

**DO I HAVE TO BE IN DC TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WRITE ON?**

No. The Write On competition is run entirely through the competition website, which you can access through the OJA website. When you complete your packet, you have the choice of uploading your completed paper to the website, hand-delivering it to OJA, or sending it by mail with a time- and date-stamp. Should you wish to hand-deliver your packet, please contact OJA to make arrangements.

**WHO JUDGES THE WRITE ON PAPERS?**

The judges are rising editorial board members from each law journal. Each paper is read by three different judges, each from a different journal. The judges score each paper on qualities such as analysis, structure, and creativity, and enter their scores directly into the Write On database.

**IS MY PAPER SCORE MADE PUBLIC?**

OJA does not release Write On paper scores to anyone. Editors and judges will only be able to identify individual papers by their packet number. The competition is completely anonymous.
How does the Write On system match me to a journal?

Once your paper has been scored by three judges, the averages of those scores are used to generate a final paper score. Your Bluebook score is added to the paper score, and then the score is scaled to produce a final Write On packet score. This Write On packet score is combined with a score based on your grades. In addition, some journals will factor in your personal statement score. The total of these scores is your raw score. Your raw score, however, will probably be different across several journals, since the journals weigh the various components of the score differently. For example, one journal might value the paper score at 50 percent of the total raw score and your grades as the other 50 percent. Another might break the total raw score down as 40 percent paper, 40 percent grades, and 20 percent personal statement. Please see the journal comparison chart and consult the individual journal letters to determine how each journal weighs the various elements.

The system first attempts to place everyone on their first-place journal, then on their second-place journal, and so on until all the journal slots are allocated.

How will I know if I made it onto a journal?

Once the final matching is run by OJA, results will be available on the Write On website. All Write On participants who complete a competition submission will receive an email when final results are available (late July).

Why don't you announce the results earlier? I want to take my journal membership into account in the early interview week bidding process, and I want to put my journal membership on my resume before the EIW upload deadline.

We have chosen our release date based on when the Office of Career Strategy schedules EIW. Given the size and complexity of the competition - including the number of judges involved, most of whom are not in DC and many of whom are abroad - we have found it difficult to release results early enough for all students to have an opportunity to update their resumes for EIW. Releasing our results early enough to give all students time to take their journal membership into account in the bidding process is also an impossibility, since to be fair to all students who are participating in EIW, we would need to release the results in early July. Such an early date would shorten the time we give judges to evaluate the papers and would leave no room for unexpected circumstances.

Since EIW interview slots are assigned in a lottery system and employers have no opportunity to accept or reject interview candidates based on the content of resumes, a student’s journal membership is not relevant for employers until the time of the screening interview. Finally, employers ask for an updated resume at the screening interview, so participants in EIW have ample opportunity to communicate their journal membership to prospective employers.

Is it possible for me to make it onto more than one journal?

We will attempt to match you to one journal. If, after being offered membership, you decide that you do not wish to be a member of that journal, you may decline membership. You will not, however, be offered any other journal memberships. This is why you should only preference journals in which you have a sincere interest. Remember as well that journal membership is a two-year commitment. Please participate in the competition only if you are willing to commit to journal membership for two years.
WHAT IF I'M NOT MATCHED TO A JOURNAL? CAN I TRY AGAIN NEXT YEAR?

Unfortunately, not everyone who participates in the Write On Competition will be matched to a journal. There are limited spaces and competition is strong. If you are not accepted to a journal, there is no other opportunity. Keep in mind, Georgetown Law offers many other activities that carry equal resume value. Career Strategy can provide excellent assistance in evaluating non-journal extracurricular options. The NALP guide also offers unique and valuable guidance specific to particular firms.

WHAT IF I AM AN EVENING STUDENT OR A JOINT-DEGREE STUDENT AND WANT TO DEFER MEMBERSHIP IN A JOURNAL UNTIL THE FOLLOWING YEAR?

Only first-year students are eligible to participate in the Write On Competition. If you are an evening student or a joint-degree student, you may not delay your participation in the COMPETITION, although if you are accepted for membership, and the journal consents, you may defer participation on the journal.

Allowing students to participate in the Write On after additional coursework or after summer legal experience would offer unfair advantages. Thus, our policy is that evening students and joint degree students must compete after their first year, but may defer membership, if offered, for one school year.

If you plan to defer journal membership, please notify OJA before the end of the competition (May 31, 2018). Deferral plans will affect neither your score nor how you are placed on a journal. We will use the information solely to facilitate staff planning for the next two years. If you are offered membership and do defer, your slot will be held until the following year. If you have any questions about this process, please email OJA at LawWriteOn@georgetown.edu.

WHAT IF I WANT TO STUDY ABROAD?

Because of the time commitment involved in journal membership, participation in study abroad programs may affect your ability to hold editorial positions in your second year of journal membership and may preclude participation on a journal altogether. Because editorial processes differ, journals have substantial autonomy in responding to requests for accommodation of study abroad opportunities. Some journals may be accommodating, and some study abroad opportunities may mesh more easily with journal membership. Inform yourself about study abroad policies of journals you wish to join.

ARE THERE ANY STRATEGIES I CAN FOLLOW TO INCREASE MY CHANCES OF BEING ACCEPTED TO A JOURNAL?

The best strategy is to write the best competition packet that you can and to do well on the Bluebook test. Every journal considers these two components in its ranking of prospective members.

Be honest with yourself about your scores. If you feel you did not write a strong paper, you should not rank first a journal that places high value on the paper score. The system factors in your preferences when generating your placement. The higher you rank, the more likely you'll be offered membership.

If you preference journals that require personal statements, be sure to spend time on them. It's easy to create a "boilerplate" personal statement to send to each journal after only minor modifications, but this will rarely bring good scores. OJA suggests that you write your statement at the start of the competition, before you are heavily
invested in your case comment. Students are often so tired after the comment that they have no desire to put more time into crafting thoughtful personal statements.

We have included more preferencing tips in the Instructions.

**IF I HAVE NOT PASSED LRW, MAY I STILL COMPETE?**

Students must compete after their 1L or 1E year. LRW grades are not released until after the Competition period. If a student fails LRW, they will be removed from the Competition and are not eligible to compete again. Students who have taken Advanced LRW will not be eligible to compete.

**MAY I STILL COMPETE IF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES PREVENT ME FROM COMPLETING 1L?**

Such extenuating circumstances are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The student, or an administrator acting on behalf of the student, should reach out to OJA as soon as possible (and prior to enrolling in classes when returning to Georgetown) to explore his/her options.

**I SEE THAT SOME JOURNALS REQUIRE A RESUME AND/OR PERSONAL STATEMENT. HOW DOES THAT WORK?**

Resumes and/or personal statements must be written and uploaded before your individual deadline. Personal statement details are included in the relevant journal letters under the Materials section of the competition site, available after purchase. Some journals will not provide a prompt, but will have suggestions for length and formatting. In the absence of a prompt, you are encouraged to write on your experience with or interest in that journal’s topic of focus.

Redact your personal information from personal statements/resumes. Personal information includes:

- your name and any contact information
- any positions you hold in Georgetown Law organizations
  - Law Fellows – list but do not identify day or night division
  - RAs – just list that you will be an RA for the summer, not where you did so
- any awards that would be obviously traceable back to you
- the name of your undergraduate institution
- any publication titles and citations
- the name of your summer firm
- anything else that would be searchable or otherwise common knowledge in the student body

Our primary goal is to ensure anonymity in the competition. Where an item to be redacted is related to the nature of the journal, include a brief note describing the nature of the item. For instance, if your undergraduate thesis is titled, “‘Three Things Very Dull Indeed’: Class, Poverty, and Welfare in Jane Austen’s England”, you might need to redact the title but add, “used the novel Emma as a springboard for exploring the pernicious and pervasive problem of poverty in early 19th-century England”.

**WHAT IS JOURNAL? WHAT WILL I BE DOING AS A JOURNAL MEMBER?**

For more information about what journals are and the role student staff plays, please see our Journals 101 info sheet, developed by the editors in chief. While the responsibilities and time commitments vary from journal to journal, this document gives a general idea of what to expect.