INFORMATION AND FAQS FOR GEORGETOWN 1ST YEARS

The 2020 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 15, 2020.

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, by accepting the Competition terms, at which point their information will be captured to charge their student account $20. 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 their membership.

In response to COVID-19, we have altered the format of the competition so that students may select the three week period that best suits them during the overall period. The competition is designed to be completed in five days. Please note that you will not be able to access materials before the competition period begins (May 15, 2020 at 9am EDT), and because you will have only 21 days from the moment of purchase to complete your competition, you should not click to start until you are ready for your time to begin. Choose your block of 21 days within the competition period wisely. The last day to start the competition with full time is July 1. You may still start the Competition after July 1, but you will not have additional time to complete the materials. All packets must be completed and out of students' hands by July 22, 2020.

Students will be able to preference journals throughout the entire competition period.

Results should be announced in late August or early September 2020.

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 preferring those journals on the Write On Competition site. The preferencing area of the website will be open during the entire competition period, but will only be available to edit once you have started your individual competition window.

Each journal will announce its criteria before the start of the competition. For more detailed information that may be useful while you are preferencing the journals, please download the Journals Comparison Chart from gtlwriteon.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.

A recording of the journals town hall will be made available online at gtlwriteon.org.
The Georgetown Law Technology Review holds a separate writing competition for membership. You can find more information at the GLTR website. Students may be members of GLTR as well as the 12 journals listed above.

**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. You must also complete a Bluebook and Editing Exam. Some journals require the submission of separate personal statements and/or resumes. You will be able to access the materials and start your three-week competition after agreeing to the Competition terms. We will charge $20 to your student account after you agree to the terms.

We have posted a set of sample instructions, a sample case comment, and a list of the materials from the 2019 competition online at gtlwriteon.org. 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 proofreading assistance. While writing, students may use a spell-check and grammar-check.

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

You will have exactly twenty-one days, to the minute, from the point at which you first agree to the terms to complete the competition. This means that if you start your packet at 11:15 am EDT on June 1, all of your completed materials must be out of your hands no later than 11:15 am EDT on June 22. The last day to start the competition with full time is July 1; all packets must be returned by July 22.

**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.

**WHO JUDGES THE WRITE ON PAPERS?**

The judges are rising senior staff members from each law journal. Each Comment is read by three different judges, each from a different journal. The judges score each paper on qualities such as analysis, structure, bluebooking, and creativity, and enter their scores directly into the Write On database. Each Bluebook and Editing Exam is read by one judge. Any editor who requests a personal/diversity statement will score the statements submitted to their journal.

**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 Case Comment score. This Case Comment score is combined with your Bluebook and Editing exam score, and a score based on your grades. In addition, some journals will factor in a personal statement score (assigned by each journal). The total of these scores is your raw score. Your raw score might be different for each journal you apply to, since the journals weight the various components of the score differently. Please see the Journal Comparison Chart and consult the individual journal letters to determine how each journal weighs the various components.

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.

Placements for Georgetown Law Journal are calculated first. If you opt in to GLJ and are placed, you will not be offered membership on any other journal.

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.

WHY DON'T YOU ANNOUNCE THE RESULTS EARLIER?

The EIC roundtable chose this timeline for 2020 after much deliberation. The journals would also like to confirm their new members earlier, but wanted to give students as much time and flexibility as possible to complete the competition successfully, given the challenges many are experiencing due to COVID-19. We also wanted to ensure the judges would have time to review the submissions thoughtfully.

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO MAKE IT ONTO MORE THAN ONE JOURNAL?

You will only receive one offer of membership. You may decline the offer if you decide that you do not wish to be a member of that journal, but you will not be offered a place on any other journal. We strongly encourage you to preference only journals you will be willing to commit to for two years of membership.

You may be on both Georgetown Law Technology Review and one of the 12 journals from the OJA Write On Competition.

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. There is no other opportunity after your 1st year summer to participate in the Write On Competition for journal membership. Georgetown Law offers many other activities, including the Georgetown Law Technology Review, that carry equal resume value. GLTR runs a separate write-on process. For more information about GLTR, contact them at gltr@georgetown.edu. 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. Allowing students to participate in the Write On after additional coursework or after summer legal experience would offer unfair advantages. Evening and joint-degree students may not delay participation in the Competition, but if placed you may defer participation on the journal for one school year.

Deferral plans will affect neither your score nor how you are placed on a journal. If you are offered membership and do defer, your slot will be held until the following year. You will need to let your new editor know as soon as possible about your intent to defer, so they can better plan their staff for the coming year. If you have any questions about this process, please e-mail 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 certain editorial positions in your second year of journal membership. 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. Journals’ study abroad policies can be found at gtlwriteon.org or in the Materials section of the Competition site.

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 paper that you can and to do well on the Bluebook and Editing exam. 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 preference, 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 start writing your statement prior to 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. This year, we expect to release personal statement prompts on April 22 at gtlwriteon.org.

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. If a student fails LRW, they will be removed from the Competition and will not be eligible to compete again. Students who have taken Advanced LRW or Advanced ConLaw 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 at gtlwriteon.org as well as under the Download section of the competition site. Some journals will not provide a specific 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?

Our journal editors prepared the following questions and answers to help address some of the common basic questions about journal membership. While the responsibilities and time commitments vary from journal to journal, this document gives a general idea of what to expect.

WHAT’S THE VALUE TO YOU?

- Being on a journal seriously, seriously prepares you for working as an attorney. You will have the opportunity to work on teams and individually to vet articles. As a 3L, you may have the opportunity to manage large groups of people and (depending on your leadership role) have a say in which articles are selected for publication.
- Being on a journal improves your resume and can broaden employment prospects. Because of the value journals offer in preparing students, many employers—from federal judges (seeking clerks) to the Department of Justice to “Big Law” and everything in between—look favorably upon (and some even require) journal work.
WHAT ARE LAW JOURNALS AND WHAT DO THEY PUBLISH?

- Scholarly articles that are submitted by lawyers or legal scholars and edited by law students
- Student-written "Notes" and "Current Developments"
- Main journal publishes on a wide range of subject matter, while other journals focus on specific areas of law

WHY ARE THEY OF VALUE?

- Keeps legal community informed of progress and emerging topics in their respective fields
- Can help develop outdated areas of law or draw attention to new developments
- Can provide diversity of opinions on different legal issues

WHAT'S THE PUBLICATION PROCESS?

- Articles are screened and selected for inclusion or exclusion in upcoming issues
- Several different teams of student editors attack the editing process from various angles
  - Broad, structural, "above-the-line" edits to article's internal logic
  - "Below-the-line" Bluebook changes to legal citations
  - Collection and authentication of the sources used
- Stylistic and formatting edits

WHAT WILL A STAFF MEMBER BE DOING AND WHAT'S THE TIME COMMITMENT?

- As a first year, likely between 2-6 hours/week, but this can vary based on which article you are working on and what the specific assignment entails
  - If you take on a senior-level Board position (3L year only), this number will increase
  - Busiest times will be the weeks leading up to production and printing deadlines
- Journal is a 2-year commitment
- The first year involves working in teams on below-the-line, bluebook edits and citation checks
- The second year opens up many new opportunities for journal members to work on a wide range of article editing and managerial jobs
- All journals have a Note requirement. Deadlines might fall in the first or second year of journal membership
- Journals that are eligible to host a symposium will have additional commitments that year

JOURNAL-LIFE BALANCE?

- It is certainly possible to balance journal membership with other extracurriculars
- Senior-level Board positions (3L year only) will be a significantly heavier time commitment, so make sure that you can handle a journal leadership position before taking it on

WHO'S OJA?

- Office of Journal Administration oversees the journals' production and printing processes
- Keeps journal on track, meeting deadlines and moving publication process forward
- Promotes journal publication to wider audiences and encourages a strong alumni pipeline
- Manages the Editors-in-Chief