

# **ELSA Tilburg × LexPressed**

## **Essay Writing Competition**

2025 – 2026

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### **Competition Rules**

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The European Law Students' Association Tilburg  
*in collaboration with LexPressed*

## Foreword

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Dear Reader,

We are delighted to present the rules governing the ELSA Tilburg Essay Writing Competition 2025–2026, organised in collaboration with LexPressed. This competition represents a shared commitment between ELSA Tilburg and LexPressed to foster legal scholarship, deepen critical thinking, and provide law students across the network with a meaningful platform to engage with pressing issues in contemporary law.

The Essay Writing Competition (EWC) is designed to challenge participants to research rigorously, argue persuasively, and write with clarity and originality. EWC rewards the craft of sustained legal writing. LexPressed brings to this collaboration its expertise in legal publishing and its dedication to amplifying student voices in the legal discourse. We are proud to partner with an organisation that shares our belief that student legal writing deserves an audience and a stage.

We encourage every participant to approach this competition with curiosity and rigour. The judges will be looking not only for technical legal accuracy, but for the kind of engaged, original thinking that makes legal writing truly worthwhile.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at the contact details provided at the end of this document. We wish all participants the very best.

Yours sincerely,

**Emily Thidarat Prins**

Vice President in charge of Competitions Committee  
ELSA Tilburg | 2025–2026

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## 1. Definitions

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- ❖ **1.1** "Competition" refers to the ELSA Essay Writing Competition organised in collaboration with LexPressed for the academic year 2025–2026.
- ❖ **1.2** "Organising Committee" (OC) refers to the group of people responsible for the organisation of the Competition, as designated by ELSA and LexPressed.
- ❖ **1.3** "Participant" refers to any eligible student who has registered and submitted an essay in accordance with these Rules.
- ❖ **1.4** "Written Submission" (WS) refers to the essay submitted by a Participant in accordance with these Rules.
- ❖ **1.5** "Panel" refers to the group of legal academics, practitioners, and/or LexPressed editors selected by the Organising Committee to evaluate the Written Submissions.
- ❖ **1.6** "Timeline" refers to the schedule of relevant deadlines communicated by the Organising Committee at the launch of the Competition.

## 2. General Remarks

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### 2.1 Introduction

- ❖ **2.1.1** These Rules govern the Competition. They may be revised or updated at any time, and any modification will be applicable as soon as it is communicated to Participants via email.
- ❖ **2.1.2** The Organising Committee has the power to interpret these Rules and resolve any disputes arising from their application.

### 2.2 Responsible Organs

- ❖ **2.2.1** ELSA, in collaboration with LexPressed, is responsible for the organisation of the Competition. The responsibility is exercised jointly by the ELSA Vice President in charge of the Competitions Committee and the founders of LexPressed.
- ❖ **2.2.2** The Organising Committee is responsible for ensuring the academic quality and integrity of the Competition, managing the Timeline, and coordinating all logistical aspects.

### 2.3 Language

- ❖ **2.3.1** The Competition will be conducted in the English language. All Written Submissions must be submitted in English.

## 3. Organisers and Participants

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### 3.1 The Panel

- ❖ **3.1.1** The Panel shall consist of a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of five (5) evaluators.
- ❖ **3.1.2** Panellists shall be legal academics, practitioners, law professors, PhD researchers, or editorial representatives of LexPressed with relevant expertise in the essay topic.
- ❖ **3.1.3** Panellists shall evaluate Written Submissions independently and shall not communicate with Participants regarding the Case or their evaluation at any stage of the Competition.

### 3.2 Participants

- ❖ **3.2.1** The Competition is open to law students enrolled in a law programme at a university where an ELSA group is present, unless otherwise specified in the Competition announcement.
- ❖ **3.2.2** Participants are eligible if they: (a) are enrolled in a law programme at an eligible university at the time of registration; (b) are not engaged in the professional practice of law other than work experience; (c) are not involved in the organisation of the Competition; (d) are members of ELSA.
- ❖ **3.2.3** The Competition may only be entered individually
- ❖ **3.2.4** A Participant who, without legitimate reason, withdraws after having registered for the Competition may, at the discretion of the Organising Committee, be banned from future ELSA Competitions events for the remainder of the scholastic year or issued a formal warning.

## 4. The Essay Topic

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### 4.1 Topic Disclosure

- ❖ **4.1.1** The essay topic and any accompanying case material will be communicated to registered Participants no later than 3 weeks before the submission deadline.
- ❖ **4.1.2** The same topic shall apply to all Participants throughout the Competition.

### 4.2 Timeline

- ❖ **4.2.1** The Organising Committee shall communicate the Timeline when the Competition is launched. The Timeline shall include all relevant deadlines.
- ❖ **4.2.2** Failure to comply with deadlines set out in the Timeline will result in penalties as specified in Section 9.

### **4.3 Registration**

- ❖ **4.3.1** Each Participant wishing to participate in the Competition must submit their application via the designated google form prior to the deadline.
- ❖ **4.3.2** Team composition shall not be changed after the registration deadline. Exceptions may be considered by the Organising Committee in extraordinary circumstances.

## **5. The Written Submissions**

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- ❖ **5.1** Each Participant or team must submit one (1) Written Submission before the deadline specified in the Timeline.
- ❖ **5.2** Written Submissions must comply with the following formatting requirements:
  - A4 paper size;
  - Font: Times New Roman;
  - Font size: 12pt for body text; 10pt for footnotes;
  - Font colour: Black;
  - Margins: 2.54 cm on all sides;
  - Line spacing: 1.5 for body text;
  - Maximum word count: 1,000 words, excluding footnotes, cover page, abstract, table of contents, and list of references;
  - Footnotes shall be used for legal references only and shall not contain substantive argument.
- ❖ **5.3** Written Submissions must be titled in the following format:  
EWC\_[TeamNumber]\_WS (e.g. EWC\_Team07\_WS).
- ❖ **5.4** Written Submissions must include the following:
  - A cover page;
  - A table of contents;
  - An essay
  - A list of references;
  - A list of abbreviations used;

- A signed declaration confirming that the submission is the Participant's own original work and has not been generated using artificial intelligence.
- ❖ **5.5** The page limit does not include the cover page, abstract, table of contents, list of references, or list of abbreviations.
- ❖ **5.6** Written Submissions and the signed declaration shall be saved and submitted as a single PDF document, sent as an email attachment to the address specified in the Competition announcement.
- ❖ **5.7** All Written Submissions will be verified for plagiarism, including the use of AI detection tools. Any submission found to contain AI-generated content will be treated as an act of plagiarism in accordance with Section 8.3
- ❖ **5.8** The best submissions may, at the discretion of LexPressed and the Organising Committee, be selected for publication in LexPressed, subject to the author's consent.

## 6. Scoring Criteria

Participants will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Criterion	Description	Points
Clarity and Structure	Logical organisation, clear headings, coherent flow	15
Legal Research	Breadth and depth of sources; use of case law, statutes, academic literature	25
Legal Analysis & Argumentation	Correct application of law; soundness, coherence and persuasiveness of arguments	35
Critical Engagement	Engagement with counter-arguments; nuance and originality of reasoning	15
Written Communication & Style	Precision, formal tone, grammar, syntax, and command of language	20
Originality & Creativity	Creative interpretation of legal issues; novel and practical solutions	10
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>120</b>

- ❖ **6.1** Written Submissions will be scored by the Panel. Each Panellist shall complete a scoring sheet for each submission assigned to them.
- ❖ **6.2** The final score for each submission is calculated as the average of all Panellist scores received.
- ❖ **6.3** Scores will be published by the Organising Committee in a final report after the Competition has concluded.

## 7. Competition Structure and Awards

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### 7.1 Structure

- ❖ **7.1.1** The Competition consists of a single written round. All Participants submit their essays before the deadline, and the Panel evaluates all Written Submissions according to the scoring criteria in Section 6.
- ❖ **7.1.2** The Organising Committee reserves the right to introduce additional rounds (e.g. an oral defence or shortlist round) in future editions or in the event of a large number of submissions.

### 7.2 Awards

- ❖ **7.2.1** The following awards shall be presented at the conclusion of the Competition:
  - First Place: Winner of the Essay Writing Competition
  - Second Place: Runner-Up
  - Third Place: Honourable Mention
- ❖ **7.2.2** All award recipients will receive a certificate of achievement, signed by the Vice President in Charge of the Competitions Committee of ELSA and the LexPressed Representative.
- ❖ **7.2.3** A Certificate of Participation will be issued to all Participants who submit a complete Written Submission by the deadline.
- ❖ **7.2.4** Winning and shortlisted submissions may be considered for publication in LexPressed, an ELSA Journal subject to the author's consent and LexPressed editorial standards.

## 8. Expected Standards of Behaviour

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### 8.1 Anonymity

- ❖ **8.1.1** Participants are permitted to announce their participation in the Competition publicly; however, their assigned team number must be kept confidential until the end of the Competition.
- ❖ **8.1.2** Participants must not include their name, institution, or any other identifying information within the body of the Written Submission. Any identifying information found in the submission will result in a penalty as specified in Section 9.

### 8.2 Communication

- ❖ **8.2.1** Participants are prohibited from engaging in any communication with members of the Panel regarding the essay topic or the Competition at any stage prior to the announcement of results.
- ❖ **8.2.2** All correspondence relating to the Competition must be directed to the Organising Committee via the official contact email.

### 8.3 Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

- ❖ **8.3.1** Participants shall not commit plagiarism. Plagiarism constitutes the dishonest presentation of non-original work or ideas as one's own, whether intentional or unintentional. This includes direct or indirect use of another's work without proper citation.
- ❖ **8.3.2** The use of artificial intelligence tools (including but not limited to large language models) to generate any part of a Written Submission is strictly prohibited and will be treated as an act of plagiarism.
- ❖ **8.3.3** All submissions will be verified using plagiarism detection and AI detection software. Teams found to have committed plagiarism are subject to penalties as specified in Section 9.

## 9. Penalties

Participants shall be aware of the following penalties:

Violation	Penalty
Submission more than 48 hours past the deadline	Disqualification
Submission 24–48 hours past the deadline	-20 points
Submission up to 24 hours past the deadline	-10 points
Plagiarism (including AI-generated content)	-30 to -70 points or disqualification, depending on severity
Failure to include abstract / executive summary	-10 points
Failure to include a table of contents	-5 points
Failure to include a list of references	-5 points
Exceeding the maximum word count	-5 points per 100 words over the limit
Incorrect font or font size	-2 points
Incorrect line spacing	-2 points
Incorrect margins	-2 points
Submission in wrong file format (not PDF)	-5 points
Incorrect document title format	-5 points

Violation	Penalty
Failure to include author declaration	-10 points

- ❖ **9.1** Where reference is made in the above table to disqualification, the Organising Committee has discretion, in exceptional circumstances, to substitute a lesser penalty.
- ❖ **9.2** The Organising Committee reserves the right to impose additional penalties not specified above in cases of serious misconduct, in proportion to the severity of the breach.

## 10. Contact

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If you have any questions regarding the Competition, please contact:

**ELSA Organising Committee**

Email: [competitions.tilburg@nl.elsa.org](mailto:competitions.tilburg@nl.elsa.org)