

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
2020 UNIFIED WRITING COMPETITION
OFFICIAL RULES

**FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THESE RULES WILL RESULT IN
DISQUALIFICATION FROM THE UNIFIED WRITING COMPETITION**

ELIGIBILITY

All students are eligible to participate in the Unified Writing Competition (UWC). 1L Day, 1L Evening, and 2L Evening students will receive priority over 2L Day and 3L Evening students in journal selection. The *Fordham Law Review* and *Fordham Urban Law Journal* only consider 1L Day and Evening students. The accompanying handout discusses each journal's description and eligibility requirements.

TIME AND LOCATION

The UWC will begin at 7:00 a.m. (EDT) on Sunday, May 17, 2020, and conclude at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, May 22, 2020. The official competition clock will be based on Fordham's computer network, which follows the international atomic clock.

The UWC is conducted online on Fordham University's LawNET platform. Competitors may participate from any physical location. **Competitors must ensure that they have reliable access to: (1) the Internet, and, preferably, (2) a printer and (3) scanner or mobile scanning application.** The competition may be found at:

<http://law.fordham.edu/uwc>

COMPETITION EXERCISES

To complete the UWC, all students must submit two mandatory exercises: (1) a Bluebook exercise and (2) a written analysis of a legal problem in the form of a student note. These mandatory exercises are discussed in greater detail below.

In addition to the mandatory exercises, students are encouraged to complete journal-specific statements. The *Law Review* accepts an optional 500-word Diversity Statement and *Urban Law Journal* accepts an optional 500-word Personal Statement. The *Environmental Law Review* requires a one-page Personal Statement. All other journals accept an optional Statement of Interest. These are discussed in greater detail on the accompanying handout labeled "Journal Descriptions" and on each journal's website.

JOURNAL OFFERS

Fordham's journals will begin to make offers to students by **Sunday, June 28, 2020**. Please be advised that offers are extended on a rolling basis and will continue to be extended throughout the following week. Once a competitor selects a journal, they should immediately accept the offer and notify other journals of the decision. All offers will be concluded by **Friday, July 3, 2020**.

CONFLICTS

Students with compelling conflicts—including, but not limited to full time employment—may request to participate in an alternate competition. **The alternate competition will take place from 9:00 a.m. on Friday, May 22, 2020, to 9:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 27, 2020.** This includes Memorial Day weekend.

To participate in the alternate competition, you must submit the following information to the UWC Administrator, Zulkifl Zargar, at FordhamLRevENE@fordham.edu, with the subject line “Alternate 2020 UWC Request,” **by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 1, 2020:** (1) your full name, (2) your telephone number, (3) a detailed explanation of your conflict, and (4) documentation of your conflict (e.g., a copy of your brother’s wedding invitation AND a copy of your travel itinerary, or a letter from your employer verifying your work hours). You will receive approval to participate in the alternate competition on a rolling basis.

Students may also request additional alternative arrangements for religious observance.

HONOR CODE

ANY VIOLATION OF THE HONOR CODE WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION AND REFERRAL TO THE DEAN FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The UWC is conducted pursuant to Fordham’s Code of Academic Responsibility (or “Honor Code”), which prohibits, among other things, obtaining unauthorized assistance and using unauthorized sources in the course of completing an exercise.

YOU MAY NOT COLLABORATE OR DISCUSS ANY ASPECT OF THE COMPETITION WITH ANYONE. “Anyone” includes, but is not limited to classmates, family members, friends, coworkers, spouses, and outside lawyers regardless of their relationship to the writing competition or Fordham University School of Law. This rule extends from the beginning of the competition until all journal offers have been made.

You may not receive assistance of any kind from anyone, including editing assistance.

You may not conduct outside research of any kind, including research on the Internet. **You may not look at or attempt to look at** any journal publication or student note after the competition has begun.

You may not look at or attempt to acquire UWC submissions from previous years at any time.

You may not attempt to access UWC competition materials on LawNET outside of the dates and times of the competition in which you are approved to participate, unless such access has been specifically authorized by the UWC Administrator. ANY attempt to tamper with, disable, or defeat the permissions and protections of LawNET is a violation of the Honor Code.

You may not share your LawNET login credentials with anyone. This includes sending your competition information to the UWC Administrator in any correspondence, other than your **final** submission to UWC@fordham.edu (discussed below).

PLEASE TAKE ALL MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT YOUR INTEGRITY AND ACADEMIC HONESTY CANNOT BE QUESTIONED.

GENERAL COMPETITION PROCEDURES

Identification

1L Day and Evening students will be automatically registered to participate in the UWC. 2L Day and Evening students, 3L Evening students, and LLMs must contact the UWC Administrator, Zulkifl Zargar, at FordhamLRevENE@fordham.edu to register for the UWC.

Competitors will receive their competition number in an email to their **Fordham email address** once they are registered to participate in the UWC. This number will serve as your identity in the UWC. If you do not automatically receive this registration email by Friday, May 1, 2020, please contact the UWC Administrator, Zulkifl Zargar, at FordhamLRevENE@fordham.edu.

You will use your Fordham AccessIT ID to access the competition materials on LawNET.

You must place your competition number on the **top right corner of each page of your submission** (not only on your note, but also on your Bluebook exercise and any additional submission materials). **DO NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, place your name, email address, Fordham ID number, or any other identifying information ANYWHERE on your submission. If you do, your submission will not be considered.**

The UWC is conducted **STRICTLY** anonymously. The **only** places where you should provide any identifying information are: (1) the mandatory "Competitor Information" form on LawNET and (2) the body of your mandatory email submission to UWC@fordham.edu (discussed below).

Prior to submitting your competition materials, you must input your "Competitor Information" in Part A of the "Competition Form." To reach the "Competition Form," you must go to <http://law.fordham.edu/uwc>. Then, click the "Go to the Competition Form" button on the UWC home page. In Part A of the "Competition Form," provide your year in school, mailing address, and phone number. **Note that on this form, your "Year in School" is the year and division that you are about to finish (most competitors, therefore, will be 1L Day and 1L Evening students).** Also, you should submit the phone number by which you may be reached in late June to early July, accounting for any travel plans.

Access

Competition materials will be made accessible to UWC competitors at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, May 17, 2020. All competition materials will be available on LawNET and may be viewed, downloaded, or printed for the duration of the competition. Competition materials will be removed and the ability to submit or modify submissions will be disabled at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, May 22, 2020.

To access the Bluebook and student note exercises, go to <http://law.fordham.edu/uwc>. On the UWC home page, click the "View Competition Exercises" button. There, you will be presented with a list that will contain the Bluebook exercise and note sources.

Competition materials will be made accessible to those competitors who have successfully petitioned for participation in the alternate competition at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, May 22, 2020. All competition materials will be available to those competitors on LawNET and may be viewed, downloaded, or printed for the duration of the alternate competition. Competition materials will be removed and the ability to submit or modify submissions will be disabled at 9:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 27, 2020.

Exceptional Circumstances

Any corrections, additions, or modifications to UWC rules or materials will be communicated to competitors via the “Announcements” area on the UWC home page. Competitors will also receive an email notification of new “Announcements.”

Extensions will NOT be granted for students who fall ill during the competition. However, students with compelling circumstances—such as hospitalization—may be considered for short extensions. The UWC Administrator should be notified **immediately** of any such occurrence, and the student seeking an extension due to serious illness must provide documentation of hospitalization.

In the unlikely event that LawNET should fail during the competition, please inform the UWC Administrator immediately. Alternative submission procedures may be considered.

PERMITTED COMPETITION MATERIALS

ANY PARTICIPANT WHO USES ANY IMPERMISSIBLE OUTSIDE SOURCE WHATSOEVER WILL BE DISQUALIFIED AND REFERRED TO THE DEAN FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Approved Materials

You may use the following materials when completing the UWC exercises:

- 1) The materials provided in the “Competition Exercises” library on LawNET
- 2) These rules
- 3) The documents provided in the “Tips and Tricks” library on LawNET
- 4) The 20th edition of the Bluebook (in hard copy or at <http://www.legalbluebook.com>)
- 5) A nonlegal dictionary (in hard copy or online)
- 6) A legal dictionary (i.e., Black’s Law Dictionary)
- 7) A thesaurus (in hard copy or online)

USE OF ANY OTHER MATERIALS IS ABSOLUTELY PROHIBITED. This prohibition extends to all online materials not listed above.

Your note must be based **ONLY** on the materials provided in the “Competition Exercises” library on LawNET. You **CANNOT** access **ANY** material on Westlaw, Lexis, Bloomberg, or any other online materials, except for those listed above. Some of the provided sources will contain additional cited materials. You are **NOT** permitted to perform searches on these outside materials to learn more information; you may only use the information available in the provided sources.

The Bluebook

Your note and Bluebook exercise must conform to the 20th edition of the Bluebook. Please make sure that you have the 20th edition, as it differs significantly from the 19th. Do not use the AWLD book or any other citation system.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

IF YOU DO NOT SUBMIT ALL THE REQUIRED MATERIALS BY BOTH METHODS BEFORE THE DEADLINE, YOUR SUBMISSION WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

Your completed submission will comprise your note, your Bluebook exercise, and your Diversity Statement, Personal Statement and Statements of Interest if you choose to write one or more. You are required to submit your completed submission in **TWO** separate ways: (1) by uploading your submission to LawNET **AND** (2) by emailing your submission to **UWC@fordham.edu**. **BOTH LAWNET AND EMAIL** submissions **MUST** be received by 7:00 p.m. on Friday, May 22, 2020 (or 9:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 27, 2020, for students participating in the alternate competition). In addition, you must complete the Honor Statement and the "Competitor Information" forms on LawNET.

LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

(1) SUBMIT ON LAWNET

Completed submissions **MUST** be submitted through LawNET by the deadlines stated above. When you have completed your Bluebook exercise, note, and optional Diversity Statement, Personal Statement and Statements of Interest, navigate to the "**Competition Form**" on LawNET. There, you will find the submission form, which is divided into four parts.

As discussed above, competitors must input their "Competitor Information" in Part A.

In Part B, you **MUST** select **ALL** the journals you would like to consider your submission. Only the journals you select will receive your submission. Additionally, in Part B you must upload your journal-specific Diversity Statement, Personal Statement, and Statements of Interest if you choose to write one or more. To attach a statement for a selected journal, click "Choose File" after checking the box next to the journal name. Browse for the file that you wish to submit, and then click "Open." Repeat this process to attach as many files as your submission requires.

In Part C of the "Competition Form," you must upload your completed Bluebook exercise and note. To upload your exercises, click "Choose File." Browse for the file that you wish to submit and then click "Open."

ALL ATTACHED FILES MUST BE IN PDF FORMAT.

Before submitting your competition materials, you must agree to the **Honor Statement** in Part D of the "Competition Form." Because the competition requires anonymity, you will **sign this statement by indicating "I agree."** The electronic medium does not diminish the gravity of this affirmation. Your agreement to the Honor Statement certifies that you abided by the Honor Code throughout the competition and that you participated in strict compliance with the competition's no-aid and closed-universe requirements.

Once you have completed each part of the "Competition Form," click "**Save**" at the bottom of the page to submit your materials. You will then receive a confirmation email at your Fordham email address.

The files that you attach to your LawNET submission must be named by the following conventions:

Competitor_[competition number]_Bluebook_Exercise

Competitor_[competition number]_Note

Any additional submission materials, such as a journal-specific Diversity Statement, Personal Statement or Statement of Interest, must be named by the following convention:

Competitor_[competition number]_[abbreviated journal name]_[type of additional material]

Use the following abbreviated journal names:

Fordham Law Review: FLR

Fordham Urban Law Journal: ULJ

Fordham International Law Journal: ILJ

Fordham Intellectual Property, Media & Entertainment Law Journal: IPLJ

Fordham Journal of Corporate & Financial Law: JCFL

Fordham Environmental Law Review: ELR

For example, if your competition number is “UWC000” and you wish to submit a Diversity Statement to the *Fordham Law Review*, name that document “Competitor_UWC000_FLR_Diversity_Statement.”

(A) Editing LawNET Submissions

You may edit your LawNET submission at any time during the competition. To do so, navigate to the “Competition Form” on LawNET. Next to the item that you would like to update or edit, click “Replace.” Then click “Choose File.” Browse for the file that you wish to upload and then click “Open.” Be sure to “Save” any changes made and confirm that your submission appears on the “Competition Form.” If the file is not a PDF, it will not upload. You will receive a new confirmation email whenever you successfully edit your submission.

(B) Journal-Specific LawNET Submissions

You are encouraged to submit to all journals. If you wish to submit to all journals, simply mark the box next to the name of each journal listed in Part B. You may wish, however, to submit to only some journals and not others. To do this, select those journals in Part B to which you wish to submit and do not mark the other journals.

(2) SUBMIT BY EMAIL

IN ADDITION to submission through LawNET, completed submissions **MUST ALSO** be emailed to UWC@fordham.edu by the deadlines stated above.

NO emails aside from FINAL submissions may be sent to this address. Unlike the LawNET submission, the email submission may **NOT** be updated. The body of the email message **must** contain your full name but must **otherwise remain blank**. The subject line of the email must read:

Unified Writing Competition Competitor [competition number]

Each email submission must have at least two attachments: (1) your note and (2) your Bluebook exercise. **ATTACHMENTS MUST BE IN PDF FORMAT.** Your email submission attachments must be named by the following conventions:

Competitor_[competition number]_Bluebook_Exercise

Competitor_[competition number]_Note

Any **additional submission materials must also be attached to your email submission**, including any journal-specific Diversity Statement, Personal Statement or Statements of Interest. Any such additional submission materials **must be in PDF format** and named by the following convention:

Competitor_[competition number]_[abbreviated journal name]_[type of additional material]

Use the following abbreviated journal names:

Fordham Law Review: FLR

Fordham Urban Law Journal: ULJ

Fordham International Law Journal: ILJ

Fordham Intellectual Property, Media & Entertainment Law Journal: IPLJ

Fordham Journal of Corporate & Financial Law: JCFL

Fordham Environmental Law Review: ELR

For example, if your competition number is “UWC000” and you wish to submit a Diversity Statement to the *Fordham Law Review*, name that document “Competitor_UWC000_FLR_Diversity_Statement.” Be sure to include your competition number on the top right corner of any additional submission materials.

Avoid Excessively Large Attachments

Try to ensure that your email attachments are not excessively large. Attachments larger than approximately 5 MB are excessively large. While you will not be penalized for submitting excessively large attachments, they will take longer to upload and may cause your submission email to be rejected.

To attain a smaller file size, trying to reduce the resolution of your scanned images via Adobe Acrobat (but make sure that they remain legible).

Timely Submissions

You should endeavor to submit your exercises as soon as you can. Be aware that other competitors will be downloading and uploading materials during the competition as well. **It is competitors’ responsibility to avoid slowdown due to the volume of activity.** Do not wait until the hour before the deadline to submit, when peak volume should be expected. You must avoid missing the deadline to upload and email because of computer difficulties. **EXTENSIONS WILL NOT BE GRANTED.**

EXERCISE 1: BLUEBOOKING

In accordance with the policy of the vast majority of courts and law school journals throughout the country, the journals at Fordham University School of Law follow the citation rules of the Bluebook, 20th edition. One of the primary responsibilities of any journal staff member is Bluebook proofreading and editing. The Bluebook exercise is designed to test a competitor's ability to use the Bluebook to edit a note, comment, or article.

This exercise consists of editing an unedited portion of a scholarly work. You must correct errors throughout the piece, including both Bluebook and spelling mistakes. Do not correct grammatical errors or make grammatical/stylistic suggestions. You are advised to **read both the main text and the citations very carefully**. For the purposes of this exercise, you should **never** use *italics*. Wherever the Bluebook directs you to use *italics*, you should underline.

Competitors should familiarize themselves with the 20th edition of the Bluebook before the UWC begins. **DO NOT** use the blue pages (for practitioners) in the front of the Bluebook.

To find the Bluebook exercise during the competition, click the "View Competition Exercises" button on the UWC home page. Select the document labeled "2020 UWC Bluebook Exercise."

There are two permissible ways to complete your Bluebook exercise. The first option is preferable but requires access to a printer. In light of the current circumstances, the second option is electronic and also acceptable.

- (1) You must print the exercise, make your edits in ink by hand, scan the completed exercise (either by using a traditional scanner, or a mobile scanning application to take pictures), and submit it as a PDF. It is your responsibility to make sure the file size is not excessively large so as to create uploading issues. **All edits must be in ink on the document itself and must be LEGIBLE and INTELLIGIBLE.** Competitors may want to familiarize themselves with the *Chicago Manual of Style's* proofreading marks before the competition, but any intelligible edits are acceptable. Competitors **may not** consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* during the competition.
- (2) You must download the PDF exercise and convert it to a Microsoft Word document. (This may require using a free online converter, which is permitted as a resource solely for this option.)
 - a. The **first** step you must take is to anonymize yourself **before** making any edits, or you will risk disqualification.
 - i. On a Mac, click on Word, then on Preferences, and then on User Information. Enter your UWC ID in the name slot and enter "UWC" in the initials slot. Then check "Always use this name regardless of how I'm signed in to Office."
 - ii. On a PC, click on File, then on Options, and then on the General tab. Enter your UWC ID in the name slot and enter "UWC" in the initials slot. Then check "Always use these values regardless of sign in to Office."

You must make your edits either directly in the document using the Track Changes feature or in the margins using the Comment feature, both of which are located under the Review tab. However, for **any and all edits to citations**, you **must** re-write the **entire, correct version** of the citation in a corresponding Comment—this Comment **must** be anchored directly onto the citation's number in the main text. **The text in all Comments must be presented in Courier New 10 pt. font.** After you are finished, you must convert the document back into a PDF that includes all Tracked Changes and Comments. On a Mac, this means saving as a PDF under "Best for printing," and on a PC, it means saving the document such that all document markup is retained. Check the PDF to make sure your edits are retained. (You should practice all these steps before the UWC if you plan to use option (2)).

For option (1), write your UWC number **clearly** on the top right corner of **EVERY PAGE** of the Bluebook exercise. For option (2), type your UWC **accurately** in the header on the top right corner such that it is on **EVERY PAGE** of the Bluebook exercise.

This exercise is designed to be completed in approximately twelve hours and it is strongly recommended that you spend around that amount of time on this exercise, including double-checking. This will allow for ample time to thoroughly complete this exercise and to work on the note exercise. Competitors may not consult any materials other than those approved by these rules.

EXERCISE 2: NOTE WRITING

A note is a structured scholarly analysis of a disputed legal issue. Journal staff members have the opportunity to write their own note for publication. This exercise is designed to test your ability to analyze the provided source material, identify an issue, formulate arguments, express your arguments in written form, and support your statements and arguments with the provided sources.

Journals assess your legal analysis skills, writing ability, and the quality of your citations.

Your note should follow the same format as those published in journals, and your citations should conform to the 20th edition of the Bluebook. **Once the competition commences, use of example notes and publications constitutes outside research and is absolutely prohibited under the Honor Code.** Competitors must become familiar with the form, style, and structure of a student note **BEFORE** the competition begins. Please note that your submission must have ENDNOTES, rather than footnotes.

Note Materials

You will be provided with approximately twelve to eighteen sources of a variety of types, such as cases, statutes, law review articles, et al. You will **not** be provided with a question or prompt. Based **solely and entirely** upon the materials provided to you, you must discern the issue and write an original note.

You should explain the issue and take a position advocating a particular solution to the problem. Support this position **only** with the provided note sources. Use the materials supplied as underlying support for your argument; do not simply describe what is contained in the materials.

To find the note source materials, click the "View Competition Exercises" button on the UWC home page. There, you will find all of the source materials that you may use to write your note. Select any document to view, download, or print it.

Formatting Conventions

Your submission must be typewritten using **Courier New 12 pt. font**. The length limitation is **ten double-spaced pages (with 1" margins), NOT including the endnotes** (see below). Please note that the default margins for Microsoft Word may be 1.25" on the left and right, so be sure to adjust the settings accordingly. You must leave your **margins unjustified** (i.e., align text left).

If you feel that there is a discrepancy between the way something is cited in a journal and in the Bluebook, follow the Bluebook form. With reference to typeface conventions in the text and the endnotes of your note, you should **never** use *italics*. Wherever the Bluebook directs you to use *italics*, you should underline. Thus,

if the Bluebook calls for *Ex parte* McCardle, you should write Ex parte McCardle.

Your note is limited to a **maximum of ten pages (excluding endnotes)**. There is no word limit, but your submission must use the proper font, spacing, and margin conventions. You must include **two spaces** after every period. Include **page numbers** on the bottom center of each page. Include your competition number in the header on the **top right corner of each page** of your note.

Endnotes

You must put all citation information into endnotes. **Do not use footnotes.** There is no page limit for the endnotes. You should expect to have an endnote for nearly every sentence of your note. Anything that you write that you did not invent **MUST** be cited to its source or it constitutes plagiarism.

Your endnotes should follow the **same format conventions as your text** and must be **double-spaced** and presented in **Courier New 12 pt. font** (with 1" margins, unjustified). Number your endnotes using **Arabic numbers** (1, 2, 3, 4 . . .) not Roman or other numerals.

SUBMISSIONS THAT DO NOT ABIDE BY THESE RULES WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

QUESTIONS

All inquiries regarding the UWC should be directed to Zulkifl Zargar, the UWC Administrator and Executive Notes Editor of the *Fordham Law Review*, at FordhamLRevENE@fordham.edu. This is the **ONLY** email address you should use for questions. **DO NOT** send inquiries to UWC@fordham.edu or a personal email address, because you will not receive a response.

During the UWC, you are **NOT** guaranteed an answer to an email inquiry, especially if it concerns an instruction covered in these rules. **DO NOT** stop working while waiting for an email answer during the UWC. Please review the competition rules and the following questions before contacting the UWC Administrator.

- Q: Is there standardized shorthand that ought to be used to complete the Bluebook exercise?
A: No. As long as the edits are legible and intelligible, no specific shorthand is required. If you are completing the exercise electronically, you must write out entire citations inside Comment bubbles when making your edits.
- Q: May I use an electronic version of the 20th edition of the Bluebook?
A: Yes. The 20th edition of Bluebook is available at <http://www.legalbluebook.com>.
- Q: Must I comply with Bluebook rules requiring SMALL CAPS?
A: Yes. You should familiarize yourself with all of your word processor's functionalities, including SMALL CAPS, ahead of the competition.
- Q: May I refer to an electronic or hard copy of any journal publication during the competition?
A: No. Review external journal publications as a style and formatting reference prior to the UWC.
- Q: Must I include an abstract or a table of contents with my note?
A: No. Doing so would count against your ten-page limit.
- Q: May I view competition materials from past UWCs?
A: No.
- Q: Do I need to rank the journals in order of preference?
A: No. Competitors need not bid on journals by preference.
- Q: When the competition began, I tried to access the UWC LawNET platform and no materials were available. Should I freak out?
A: No, this is a common occurrence. Simply log out of LawNET and then log back in. If the problem persists, contact the UWC Administrator.
- Q: May I submit any of my competition materials as Word documents?
A: No. The UWC submission form will **ONLY** accept documents in PDF format.