



# The Yale Law Journal

## NOTES & COMMENTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This guide is meant to address questions commonly asked by student authors as they prepare to submit (or resubmit) their scholarship to the *Yale Law Journal* as a Note or Comment. If you have questions unaddressed here, the Notes & Comments Committee encourages you to browse additional resources for student submissions on the *Yale Law Journal* [website](#) or to contact Managing Editors Matthew Beattie-Callahan ([matthew.beattie-callahan@yale.edu](mailto:matthew.beattie-callahan@yale.edu)) and Ako Ndefo-Haven ([ako.ndefo-haven@yale.edu](mailto:ako.ndefo-haven@yale.edu)).

### I. SUBMISSIONS LOGISTICS

#### Who is eligible to submit a Note or Comment?

J.D., M.S.L., and LL.M. candidates\* at Yale Law School can submit Notes and Comments. Students may submit cowritten Notes or Comments (with a maximum of two authors) only if both authors are eligible J.D., M.S.L., LL.M. candidates at Yale Law School. Eligible LL.M. candidates may submit only to **either** Notes & Comments **or** Articles & Essays in Volume 135. In other words, an LL.M. candidate who is otherwise eligible to submit to Notes & Comments or Articles & Essays **may not submit both types of scholarship**. Students who have already acquired a J.D. may *not* submit a Note or Comment, but are welcome to submit Articles, Essays, or *Forum* pieces.

Eligible students may submit up to a maximum of one Note and two Comments per drop date. Eligible students may also publish up to one Note and one Comment in Volume 135. Eligible students may publish up to one Note and two Comments total *across* Volumes (e.g., a student who published one Note and one Comment in Volume 134 will not be allowed to publish a second Note in Volume 135, though they may publish a second Comment in Volume 135). Otherwise-eligible members of the Class of 2025 may submit a Note or Comment to any of Volume 135's four drop dates, including the July and September drop dates following their graduation.

#### What is the submissions timeline for Notes and Comments? When does the Committee review submissions?

The Committee invites students to submit Notes and Comments in advance of any of the *Journal's* four deadlines (“drop dates”) throughout the year. Volume 135's submission deadlines (“drop dates”) are: **February 20, 2025, at 5 p.m., April 3, 2025, at 5 p.m., July 3, 2025, at 5**

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\* LL.M. candidates who **do not already have J.D.s** are eligible to submit Notes and Comments. LL.M. candidates who have existing J.D.s may *not* submit Notes and Comments, and are encouraged to submit Articles, Essays, or *Forum* pieces.

**p.m., and September 11, 2025, at 5 p.m.,** all Eastern Time.

After each drop date, the Committee considers all scholarship submitted before that drop date. Students may submit their work at any time, but the Committee does not review submissions on a rolling basis. For example, you are welcome to submit your work for the April drop date at any time between February 20 and April 3, but the Committee will not begin its review until after April 3. There is no advantage to submitting early.

All submissions are reviewed anonymously. Each submission is first evaluated by a Subcommittee of Notes & Comments Editors. Notes and Comments that advance past the Subcommittee stage are then subject to preemption checks and reviewed by the Full Committee. Before accepting a Note or Comment at Full Committee, the Committee also seeks the input of consults with relevant scholarly expertise or practical experience. The review process takes approximately three weeks.

For more information on the logistics of submitting a Note or Comment, see the Notes and Comments Submission Guidelines linked on our [Student Submissions site](#).

### **How flexible are the formatting requirements for Notes and Comments?**

The Committee reviews submissions for their adherence to formatting requirements and takes those requirements seriously. Please be attentive to the formatting policies specified in the Notes and Comments Submission Guidelines linked on our [Student Submissions site](#). Importantly, the Committee will not review submissions that exceed the maximum word limit. (For first-time Notes submissions, the word limit is 20,000 words, including footnotes; for first-time Comments submissions, the word limit is 7,000, including footnotes.) The Committee adheres to this policy out of fairness to applicants who spend time conforming their submissions to the Committee's requirements.

## **II. PREPARING SCHOLARSHIP FOR SUBMISSION**

### **What are the differences between a Note and a Comment? How do I choose which one to submit?**

The main difference between Notes and Comments is length: the word limit for a first-submission Note is 20,000 words, while the word limit for a first-submission Comment is 7,000 words. Both Notes and Comments offer novel, clear, and well-researched claims, and neither are limited by methodology or topic. For a longer description of Notes and Comments, please refer to the Notes and Comments Submission Guidelines linked on our [Student Submissions site](#).

Often, students who have written a successful class paper are inclined to transform it into a Note, perhaps because they already have a lengthy work product. However, the differences between class papers and Notes, particularly the fact that most Notes do not include a lengthy literature review, means that many papers can be more successfully transformed into Comments. The Committee strongly encourages students with strong class papers—even papers over 7,000

words – to consider developing their work further as a Comment.

### **How do I develop a successful Note or Comment?**

The following suggestions may be helpful as you develop your Note or Comment:

- Structure your Note or Comment in a logical way. Clearly describe its structure, as well as your overall argument, at the outset.
- Ensure that your Note or Comment makes both descriptive and normative claims. Depending on your project, you might also consider adding prescriptive claims.
- Make clear the stakes of your argument, as well as your broader topic. Put differently, tell the Committee why your Note or Comment matters.
- Thoughtfully consider counterarguments throughout your Note or Comment.

For elaboration on these points and further advice along these lines, please review the Committee's guide on Common Suggestions for Notes and Comments linked on our [Student Submissions site](#).

### **My Note or Comment is above the word limit. How should I cut it down?**

The best way to cut down your piece will vary depending on your project. That being said, the single most common way that the Committee advises authors to cut words is to streamline their literature review. For Notes, it is crucial to engage with the existing literature on your topic. However, to successfully engage with existing literature in a Note, you need not summarize the literature as fully as you might in a course paper, where you might aim to demonstrate your mastery of the material to your professor. Successful Comments might lack a literature-review section altogether, as long as they thoughtfully cite the relevant literature.

Other strategies might also prove fruitful. You might consider shortening your Introduction, which should clearly state your argument and the structure of your piece without previewing each point that you intend to make. You might also find ways to shorten or eliminate lengthy footnotes, so long as you appropriately attribute all of the claims that appear in your Note or Comment.

As you decide what to cut, we encourage you not to eliminate the central normative arguments or prescriptive claims.

### **Should I seek feedback on my Note or Comment before submitting it? If so, how?**

Students are encouraged to seek feedback from peers or professors before submitting their scholarship. Indeed, students often receive feedback from a variety of sources throughout the writing process.

In particular, the *Journal* encourages students to consult the Graduate Writing Center (GWC) for help developing their work. The Notes & Comments Committee has communicated

our submissions criteria with the GWC, and GWC tutors are adept at helping students transform existing projects into successful Notes and Comments.

For students working on empirical scholarship, the *Journal* provides opportunities to consult with its Empirical Scholarship Editor (ESE) prior to submission. For first-time submissions, the ESE can help assess data needs, locate quality data, clean or analyze data, and develop figures, charts, and other forms of data visualization. Students who have previously submitted their Note or Comment and received a Feedback Letter (formerly known as a Revise & Resubmit memo in previous Volumes) can also work with a Notes Development Editor (NDE) or a Comments Development Editor (CDE) (see below for more details).

In addition to consulting with the ESE, the Graduate Writing Center, or an NDE or CDE, the Committee recommends that student authors seek feedback from at least one professor whose substantive expertise aligns with their topic. Often, professors will be able to tell you whether your scholarship accurately describes the area of law it discusses and sufficiently responds to existing literature. For this same purpose, the Committee solicits consultations on all accepted Notes and Comments prior to their acceptance. However, the Committee does not require that student authors seek feedback from professors, and will not consider as any part of its review whether they have consulted with a professor or with whom they have consulted.

As you seek feedback on your Note or Comment, please do *not* reach out to members of the Notes & Comments Committee. Discussing your scholarship with a member of the Committee undermines its anonymized-review process and triggers recusal.

### **What are Notes Development Editors (NDEs) and Comments Development Editors (CDEs)?**

NDEs and CDEs are members of the Notes & Comments Committee. They may advise on scholarship only after its submission as a Note or Comment. Students assigned to an NDE or CDE are entitled to meet with that NDE or CDE. Following that meeting, NDEs and CDEs will also provide feedback on one Note or Comment draft. NDEs and CDEs are assigned to students on a first-come, first-served basis, and you may request one by emailing Managing Editors Matthew Beattie-Callahan ([matthew.beattie-callahan@yale.edu](mailto:matthew.beattie-callahan@yale.edu)) and Ako Ndefo-Haven ([ako.ndefo-haven@yale.edu](mailto:ako.ndefo-haven@yale.edu)). In your email, please include:

- Your name and class year
- The title of your submission
- The most recent drop date for which you submitted the piece
- A copy of any R&R(s)/Feedback Letter(s) you received

It is important that you **do not contact** a Notes & Comments Editor directly to request their assistance in developing your submission; instead, please go through the Managing Editors. For more information on these roles, see the Notes and Comments Submission Guidelines linked on our [Student Submissions site](#).

### **III. AFTER SUBMISSION**

#### **When will I find out whether my piece was accepted?**

The review process takes approximately three weeks. The Committee does not pre-commit to notifying student authors on specific dates.

#### **How soon after I find out my piece was not accepted will I receive my Feedback Letter?**

It depends. The Committee writes a significant number of Feedback Letters after each drop date. Each Feedback Letter receives multiple rounds of review by Notes & Comments Editors, the Executive Editor, and the Editor-in-Chief to ensure that student authors receive the best feedback possible. As a general matter, the Committee aims to have Feedback Letters sent to student authors within two weeks of informing student authors that their pieces were not accepted for publication. However, this estimate may vary based on a number of factors, including the number of submissions received for a given drop date and the point in the semester.

#### **How should I incorporate edits from my Feedback Letter?**

When evaluating resubmissions, the Committee carefully reviews the steps that authors take to address feedback in past Feedback Letters. Most suggestions included in Feedback Letters are *not* ones that the Committee expects authors can address with only minor or cosmetic changes, such as adding a footnote or editing a few sentences. Most suggestions will require time and thought to implement. For this reason, students often skip one drop date before resubmitting their work (e.g., submitting their work for the February and July drop dates, but not the April drop date).

Of course, you need not incorporate all of the Committee's recommended revisions. However, we recommend that you clearly explain why you chose not to implement certain suggestions in your Resubmission Memo.

#### **Should I do anything else before resubmitting?**

Your revisions should address the feedback you received in your Feedback Letter, but they need not be limited to that feedback. No Feedback Letter will capture all of the ways in which you might improve your piece. Rather, Feedback Letters seek to convey your piece's most significant areas for improvement. The Committee encourages students resubmitting their work to continue refining their writing, developing their arguments, and seeking feedback from the ESE, NDEs, CDEs, Graduate Writing Center, and professors.

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