HOW TO REVIEW SUBMISSIONS

1. Before you start

Before you review a submission:

- Make sure the submission is **anonymised** to avoid a potential conflict of interest, which may arise if you have a positive or negative predisposition towards an author (e.g., you know the author from an ELSA event). In this case, report this to the Editor in Chief so the submission can be anonymised and assigned to another Editor;
- Verify if the submission complies with a **topic** of the law review (e.g., Human rights);
- Recall the **criteria** that shall guide your review;
- Do not refuse to review a submission about a field of law you have not yet studied: the target of law review is often law students and young lawyers, regardless of their cycle of studies or area of specialisation – the submission must be comprehensible to all readers!

Remember:

- You must treat the submissions as **confidential documents**. This means you cannot share them with anyone outside of the Editorial Board;
- Your review must be **independent** from your colleagues' assessment: it is essential to have two or more impartial reviews on the same submission, therefore, avoid sharing your comments on it with other Editors during the review process.

2. The Review Report

Your review will help the Editor in Chief decide whether to shortlist the submission. Thus, make sure your comments relate to the guiding questions that your Editorial Board defined in the **review form**. Please find the draft review form in the Law Review packages as guidance.

Among others, we suggest the consideration (and inclusion in the Review Form) of the following **bullet points** to assess the quality of the submission:

- **Is there a clear and interesting thesis?**
  In other words, can you easily identify what the article is about? Or do you need to read further/put together some parts to understand the starting point of the author?

- Does the author show a **good grasp** of the article topic, developing it with depth?
  Meaning, do you feel that the article is complete and gives a good insight on the topic? Or, on the contrary, does it seem like a superficial/incomplete/not grounded/overly simplistic

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analysis that compromises the seriousness of the submission? (e.g., the article lacks factual, legislative, doctrinal or judicial basis to support author's opinion)

- Is the article **understandable** to a reader that is not familiar with the topic?
  Basically, if you never heard of the topic, could you easily follow the thinking/reasoning of the author? Or there are parts that need to be improved (e.g., complex concepts aren't explained, based on the assumption a jurist would be familiar with them)?

- Does the article make an original contribution to the field, through **new arguments/ perspectives/ conclusions/ recommendations** on the topic?

- Will the article capture and maintain the **reader's attention**?

- Does the article adhere to the **Law Review's Style Guide**?

- Do the **title** and **abstract** reflect the contents of the article?

- Is the submission **structured** in a way that effectively communicates the thesis?

- Is there **coherence** to the sentences and paragraphs?

- Does the submission appear to follow the **Law Review's Plagiarism Policy**?

- Does the range of **sources** referenced reflect the submission?

- Is there a consistent use of non-discriminatory and gender-neutral language?

3. The Review Process

3.1 How many Editors per submission?

We recommend that each submission is reviewed by a minimum of two Editors. However, your Editorial Board may decide whether all Editors must review the submissions. If the Editorial Board decides that only some Editors need to review a submission (e.g. two out of the three Editors), then, each Editor should choose the submissions they want to review as they come in. For this purpose, we suggest the Editorial Board creates a spreadsheet with the title of every submission so the Editors can sign up to review them while making sure there is an equal distribution among them.

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Each Editor should complete a Review Form for every submission and then share it with the Editorial Board (e.g. by uploading the Review Form to the relevant Google Drive folder). The goal is to foresee the submissions worth publishing based on the combination of the Review Forms of each Editors.

3.2 Which annotations should Editors make?

If you identify **deficiencies** in a submission, you should point them out and explain your judgement so both the Editor in Chief and authors are able to fully understand the reasoning behind your comments and to make the correspondent corrections or improvements (e.g. use footnotes in the Review Form to quote the parts of the submission that support your observations).

Note that you do not need to pinpoint all deficiencies you encounter (e.g. each grammar mistake throughout the submission). You are only required to notify that deficiency exists when it deserves to be notified to the Editorial Board and the author, namely, because of their number (e.g., frequent grammar mistakes) or gravity (e.g., lack of domain over basic grammar rules). As explained before, it is advisable you quote a few parts of the submission to support your consideration such as one – three examples from different parts of the submission.

3.3 Final Verdict

Once all submissions have been reviewed, the Editorial Board needs to decide on which submissions are being shortlisted. We suggest the use of a scoring method:

- **Not Shortlisted** (1-2 out of 5 points): the submission clearly does not meet relevant standards and would require significant edits to its substance and/or structure to be published;
- **May be shortlisted** (3-4 out of 5): The submission can meet the relevant standards if edits are implemented by the author.
- **Shortlisted** (4-5 out of 5): The submission satisfactorily meets the relevant standards and requires only minor edits.

Which standard of scoring and shortlisting you choose should depend on the number and quality of submissions.

4. Peer Review

It is recommendable to have the shortlisted submissions peer-reviewed by academics that are experts in the relevant fields of law. This adds legitimacy and recognition to your law review. The Editorial Board does not perform the peer review but chooses the submissions for publication based on the recommendations made by the peer reviewers.

5. Linguistic and Technical Review

Once the final submissions have been chosen for publication, the submissions must be technically edited in accordance with your style guide and linguistically edited in accordance with your language manual. These tasks may be assigned to specifically appointed Technical and Linguistic Editors.

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