

FSLA Essay Competition 2026

The Rules

Submission of the essay

1. Essays must be submitted by email with “FSLA Essay Competition 2026” in the subject line to essay@fsla.org.uk by midnight GMT on Friday 20 March 2026.

No entries after this date will be accepted for the competition. The organisers accept no responsibility for delivery or for subsequent safekeeping of any essay entered for the competition.

2. The essay should be attached to the email and the attachment should be named as follows: “FSLA Essay Competition 2026”.

Criteria for entrants

3. Subject to rule 4, the essay competition is open to anyone who satisfies any one or more of the following criteria at the point at which the competition closes in accordance with rule 1:

- 3.1 a person who is studying as an undergraduate or postgraduate student in any discipline registered with a UK educational institution (including a person studying for a Postgraduate Diploma in Law, SQE preparation course, barrister training course, or any other pre-qualification course); or

- 3.2 a person who is undergoing any period of legal professional training (such as qualifying work experience, pupillage or legal apprenticeship) with a view to qualifying as a lawyer.

4. The essay competition is not open to any person who is qualified or admitted to practice (in any jurisdiction) as a lawyer.

Essay criteria

5. Only one entry per person will be allowed for each annual competition.

6. The essay must be the sole creation and original work of the entrant. No previously published work will be accepted. Any form of plagiarism will result in immediate disqualification. All essays submitted will be closely checked for plagiarism. Entrants are expected already to be aware of any plagiarism guidance and policies of the academic and professional training institutions to which they currently belong or have belonged.

7. Any essay submitted should conform to the following rules as to content, length and style:

- 7.1 The essay should begin with a cover page stipulating the author’s full name, address, contact details (including email address), word count (see 7.2 below) and details as to how they meet

the eligibility criteria in paragraph 3 above. Information which might identify the author should not be included in any further section of the essay (including the header and footer).

7.2 The essay must be of no more than 1,500 words (including footnotes but not including the cover page).

7.3 The essay should be in Word (or equivalent) (i.e. not PDF), typed with double line spacing and contain page numbers.

7.4 The essay should use the [OSCOLA referencing system](#). Any cases or statutes referred to in any essay should be fully cited the first time that they are used.

Judging and prizes

8. FSLA reserves the right to shortlist essays prior to judging.

9. The judges' decisions on any awarding of any prize in the competition will be final and is not subject to any appeal. Essays will be judged on the quality of legal analysis, and not on judges' views as to the merits of the wider issue.

10. All shortlisting and judging will be carried out on the basis of anonymised essays.

11. First prize (the Chris Stallard Memorial Prize) is £1,500 and a legal internship at the Financial Conduct Authority. FSLA will arrange for payment of reasonable expenses (as determined by FSLA in its absolute discretion) although the internship will otherwise be unpaid. Second prize is £750. Third prize is £500.

12. FSLA reserves the right, in its absolute discretion and without notice, to:

12.1 make a substitution for any prize; or

12.2 withhold the award of any or all prizes offered (if in its view no essay entered warrants the award of any or all prize(s)).

13. Taking up of the legal internship will be subject to the winner being aged 18 or over, and FCA approval, which may require provision of personal information to the FCA, agreement to undergo security checks and confirmation that the individual has taken unpaid leave if the prize-winner is in current employment on the dates selected for the internship. If the first prize-winner is unable or chooses not to take up the legal internship there will be no substitute for this prize and it may, at FSLA Executive Committee's discretion, be offered to the other prize-winners in turn.

14. Prize-winners will be notified once judging is complete.

Information rights

- 15.** Prize-winners are entitled to refer to the achievement on their CV.
- 16.** FSLA reserves the right to publish or reproduce any essay entered for the competition, wholly or in part, as well as the name and educational institution of the author. In reproducing any essay FSLA reserves the right to omit, alter, paraphrase, or delete any part of that essay in their absolute discretion for any reason.
- 17.** Entrants who do not consent to the publishing of their name and educational establishment (as a prize-winner or otherwise) should notify FSLA by email at the point at which their essay is submitted.

Interpretation of the rules

- 18.** The decision of the FSLA Executive Committee on the interpretation of these rules will be final.