



The Yale Law Journal

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Notes and Comments

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 Josh Altman (joshua.altman@yale.edu) and Sammy Bensinger (samantha.bensinger@yale.edu).

I. SUBMISSIONS LOGISTICS

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. The first two drop dates for Volume 131 are **Friday, February 26 at 5 PM ET** and **Friday, April 9 at 5 PM ET**. The last two drop dates for Volume 131 will be in July and October, with particular dates to be determined after the second drop date.

After each drop date, the Committee considers all scholarship submitted for that drop date through its standard review process. Students may submit their work at any time before a drop date, but the Committee does not review submissions on a rolling basis. The Committee begins its review of work submitted for a given drop date after the drop date (e.g., you are welcome to submit your work for the April drop date at any time between February 26 and April 9, but the Committee will not begin its review until April 9). 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 additional details on each step of the review process, see the attached Appendix. For more information on the logistics of submitting a Note or Comment, see the [Notes Submission Guidelines](#) at pages 8-9 and the [Comments Submission Guidelines](#) at pages 6-8.

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 on page 6 of the [Notes Submissions Guidelines](#) and page 5 of the [Comments Submissions Guidelines](#). Importantly, the Committee will not review submissions that exceed the mandatory word limit. (For first-time Notes submissions, the word limit is 15,000 words, including footnotes; this limit is 7,000, including footnotes, for first-time Comments submissions.) The Committee adheres to this policy out of fairness to applicants who spend time conforming their submissions to the Committee's word-count requirements.

II. PREPARING SCHOLARSHIP FOR SUBMISSION

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.
- Give thoughtful consideration to 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](#).

My Note or Comment is above 15,000 or 7,000 words, respectively. 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 course paper, where you might aim to demonstrate your mastery of particular material to your professor. Successful Comments might lack a literature-review section altogether, as long as they thoughtfully cite to 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 free to seek feedback from peers or professors before submitting their scholarship, and the Committee encourages them to do so. Indeed, students often receive feedback from a variety of sources throughout the writing process.

The *Journal* provides opportunities to consult with its Practical Scholarship Editors (PSEs) prior to submission. PSEs can offer feedback at any stage of the writing process. Students whose submissions build upon previous work from a class or clinic might also benefit from consulting with classmates or supervising professors. Students who have previously submitted their Note or Comment and received a Revise & Resubmit letter (R&R) can also work with a Notes Development Editor (NDE) or a Comments Development Editor (CDE).

In addition to consulting with a PSE, 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 Note and Comments prior to their acceptance. However, the Committee does not require that student authors seek feedback from professors, nor will it 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 is the difference between the *Journal's* Practical Scholarship Editors (PSEs) and Notes Development Editors (NDEs) or Comments Development Editors (CDEs)?

PSEs are members of the *Journal*, who are *not* on the Notes & Comments Committee and may advise on student scholarship *before or after* its submission as a Note or Comment. PSEs are able to assist students at any stage of the drafting process—from brainstorming to final proofreading—and they typically meet with students in thirty-minute Office Hours slots. You can sign up for an Office Hours slot with Practical Scholarship Editors Atticus Ballesteros (sign-up link [here](#)) and Kayla Crowell (sign-up link [here](#)).

By contrast, 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 Josh Altman (joshua.altman@yale.edu) and Sammy Bensinger (samantha.bensinger@yale.edu). In your email, please include:

- Your name and class year
- The title of your submission
- A copy of any R&R(s) you have 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 Submissions Guidelines](#) at pages 2-3.

III. AFTER SUBMISSION

How soon after I find out my piece was not accepted will I receive my Revise and Resubmit Letter (R&R)?

Unfortunately, it depends. The Committee writes a significant number of R&Rs after each drop date. Each R&R 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 R&Rs sent to student authors within two weeks of informing student authors that their pieces were not accepted for publication. But this rough estimate may vary depending on a number of factors, including the number of submissions received for a given drop date.

How should I incorporate edits from my R&R?

When evaluating resubmissions, the Committee carefully reviews the steps that authors take to address feedback in past R&Rs. Most suggestions included in R&Rs are *not* ones that the Committee expect authors can address with only minor or cosmetic changes, such as by 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 R&R, but they need not be limited to that feedback. No R&R will capture all of the ways in which you might improve your piece. Rather, R&Rs 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 PSEs, NDEs, CDEs, and professors.

APPENDIX

Following each drop date, the Committee’s review process for scholarship submitted to that drop date proceeds along the following steps. Note that this timeline is approximate – the time required for each step will change depending on the volume of submissions that we receive.

1. Initial Allocation	2. Subcommittee	3. Checking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEs receive submissions • Submissions anonymized • Recusals noted • Submissions allocated to subcommittees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First substantive review of submissions • Focused on internal quality of writing and argument, no external review at this stage • Many pieces do not advance beyond this stage • Size ranges from 3-5 members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First external review for preemption and other external quality issues • Checking also extends to substantive legal issues involved
1-2 days	~ 5 days	

4. First Committee	5. Consults	6. Final Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second substantive review, very in-depth • Focused on quality of writing and argument in context • Includes EIC, EE, and all committee members • Few pieces advance beyond this stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second external review • At least 5 consults from academics and practitioners solicited per submission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last opportunity for substantive review • Briefer than previous meetings • All authors notified of decisions, R&R writing begins
2-3 full days	~ 5 days	Full day