

FRENCH-ENGLISH LAW STUDENT ESSAY PRIZE 2025 WITH GRAY'S INN RULES OF ENTRY

- a. **Frequency.** The Gray's Inn French-English Law Student Essay Prize will be held annually, although the organisers reserve the right not to offer it in a particular year.
- b. **Topic.** To facilitate comparison of essays submitted, a single topic in the field of French-English law will be set. The topic will focus on a comparison of law affecting commercial decisions in the French and English legal systems. For the 2025 prize, the topic is as follows:

If you were advising an entrepreneur starting up a company that develops and sells AI products would you encourage them to do so under the French or English legal system?

You may wish to consider: Would your advice assume the products were sold and used globally and would it matter whether they were goods or services or a mixture of both.

In answering this question, have in mind that you are writing advice as if you were a legal adviser explaining in English to an entrepreneur starting up a company that develops and sells AI products the relative advantages, disadvantages, risks etc. of doing so under French and English law. Express yourself clearly and directly and in explaining the law and legal implications accurately consider their practical application in a commercial context.

- c. **Original Work.** The essay should be the sole creation and original work of the entrant. The essay should be written unsupervised, meaning that it must be written without help from anyone. Applicants are required to state that the essay is their own unaided work.

Plagiarism will result in disqualification.

- d. **Length and Referencing.** Applicants/authors are required to reference their essays clearly and consistently with footnotes in a way that allows their readers to see the author's sources easily. As a result, authors should, for example, include page numbers referring to a relevant passage in secondary literature. Authors are not required to use any particular system to reference sources i.e. can use their form of referencing of choice. If full citations are used for primary sources or secondary literature in the footnotes of an essay, the author does not have to include a separate bibliography, though they may still choose to do so. If the author uses the 'author-date' method of citation, they should include a full bibliography.

Authors should not use footnotes except to provide references to primary or secondary materials and so should not use them for the development of their argument or to make other comments.

The essay must not be longer than **2,500 words**. Disregard of this rule would result in the essay being excluded from the competition. The word length does not include footnotes or bibliography, as long as the author does not use them for argument or comment as noted above.

- e. **Formatting and cover sheet.** Essays need to be typed, using a clearly legible font in size 12, at least 1.5 line spacing, with a margin of 2.5cm. Each page needs to be numbered.

The essay needs a cover sheet attached to it containing the topic, the author's name and the number of words used in the essay and a statement that the essay is the author's own unaided work. The cover sheet will not be seen by the judges as the assessment will be anonymous.

- f. **Submissions.** All entries are to be written in *English* and submitted by email to Gide at essayprize@gide.com **by the end of the day on Sunday, 14 September 2025** and Gide will undertake the administration of the prize in close co-operation with Gray's Inn's Education Department. Entries will not be accepted by any other means. Each entry must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document or PDF and include the entrant's name, contact details and stage of studies for the academic year 2024/25 e.g. *Third-year LLB student at UCL*. To avoid unconscious bias Gide will arrange for the judges to receive anonymised entries.

Only one essay to be submitted per author.

- g. **Acknowledgement and Feedback.** Safe receipt of entries for the competition will be acknowledged but the essays will not be returned.

No feedback on the essays will be provided by the judging panel or the organisers of the competition.

- h. **Entry Deadline.** The deadline for receipt of entries for the prize is the end of the day on Sunday, 14 September 2025. Entries received after that date will not be accepted for consideration.
- i. **Prize.** The winner of the competition will receive a prize of £1,500 plus a two-week paid internship* with Gide's London office; the runner-up will receive a prize of £1,000. The prize will be awarded by Gide and Gray's Inn in accordance with the decision of the Panel of Judges. The winner will receive a certificate signed by the President of the Panel of Judges. The Panel of Judges may decline to declare an essay as the winning essay or to award any prize if, in their sole discretion, the Judges conclude that no essay of sufficiently high academic quality has been submitted.
- j. **Publication.** The winning essay will be published on the Gide and Gray's Inn websites and in the Gray's Inn Student Law Journal.
- k. **Eligibility.** The prize is open to all individuals who have been in full-time legal education for *no more* than six years and *who were still in such education during the academic year 2024/2025*. There is no requirement for entrants to the competition to be a member of Gray's Inn.
- l. **Panel of Judges.** The Panel of Judges comprises the President of the Panel (the "President") plus 3-5 additional Judges. The President is approved by the Gray's Inn Management Committee.

The Panel of Judges includes notable experts in the field of French-English law and/or Franco-British relations.

The appointment of new Panel Judges can be made at the discretion of Gray's Inn and the prize sponsor.

The Panel of Judges for the 2025 prize is as follows:

- i. Sir Andrew McFarlane (Vice Treasurer of Gray's Inn and President of the Judging Panel)
 - ii. Saadia Bhatti (partner, Gide London)
 - iii. Michael Butcher (President of the Franco-British Data Society, bencher of Gray's Inn and organiser of the prize from Gray's Inn's side)
 - iv. Michael Collett, KC (barrister at 20 Essex Street)
 - v. Dr Catherine Pedamon (Senior Lecturer, Westminster Law School)
- m. **Panel Decisions and disputes.** The President of the Panel of Judges will be the final arbiter of all questions regarding entries, judging, the interpretation of the rules and any other aspect of the Gray's

Inn French-English Law Essay Prize. With respect to final panel decisions e.g. relating to the essay title and the winning or runner-up essays, in the event of a tie the President holds a casting vote.

The decision of the Panel of Judges on the winning and runner-up essays will be final and is not subject to any appeal.

In their decision-making, judges will be looking for: originality, imagination, creativity, new ideas, cross-cultural insight, evidence of research, depth of analysis, readability.

n. **Prize Award.** The prize will be awarded at a reception in London in November 2025.**

* The payment for this internship is provided to support costs of participation.

** Prize winners will be expected to arrange their own travel to the prize winner's reception.
