THE HONG KONG JOURNAL *of* LEGAL STUDIES
香 港 法 律 研 究 學 刊
403 Cheng Yu Tung Tower, Centennial Campus, the University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong
E-mail: hkjls@hku.hk Website: http://www.law.hku.hk/hkjls/

NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

In view of our Editorial Board's past experience in selecting and editing articles, we wish to provide some suggestions to potential contributors of our Journal. These suggestions are largely adopted directly from the 'Common Suggestions for Notes and Comments' by the Yale Law Journal, which we feel have succinctly summarised and provided helpful guidance to the many issues that are similarly observed in our Journal.[1]

1. Condense descriptive material and focus on your core arguments.

Descriptive material is often helpful in producing work for class or other settings, since one of the goals of writing in these settings is to demonstrate broad knowledge of the field. However, submissions (to our Journal) are meant to be a forum for original student research. Therefore, condense descriptive material (for example, case law or historical background) so that it is limited to the material necessary to support your core arguments. If the descriptive material precedes your core arguments, then foreshadow your own arguments before presenting the descriptive material, and try to arrive at your central claims as soon as you have provided sufficient background to bolster your own ideas. Limiting descriptive material can also help you to meet the word limit.

2. Make a normative claim.

In keeping with the previous suggestion, try to frame your piece in such a way that you make a normative claim – that is, a claim about what 'should be' the case. Your normative claim need not be a specific prescription for legislation or litigation (though it could be); rather, your normative claim could be an argument to the effect that we should view an issue in a different way, or that we should take a perspective that has not previously been taken. The overall point is that you should want something to change after people read your submission – whether our legal arguments or our understanding of an issue – and you should tell the readers what that desired change is.

[1] The Yale Law Journal, 'Common Suggestions for Notes and Comments' (*The Yale Law Journal*) <www.yalelawjournal.org/files/CommonSuggestionsforNotesandComments_jg9wa6ar.pdf> accessed 15 March 2026.

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3. Emphasise the stakes of your topic and your argument.

Each submission should be able to answer the 'so what?' question: why should readers care about this issue and your approach to it? Towards the beginning of the piece, you should draw out the implications of your argument for the development of the law or for a body of scholarship, and help the reader see what would change if your approach were accepted. If your piece is on a more specialised area, then you should try to connect your conclusions to broader aspects of the law or ideas with which readers may be more familiar.

4. Explain your original contribution and the ways in which it differs from existing scholarship.

Originality is an important element of submissions, and we encourage you to explain the ways in which your piece is original. You should use part of the body of the submission – usually in the Introduction – to make a case for the piece's originality, and you should, as appropriate, differentiate your arguments from other authors' works at other junctures in the paper. Please note that not all aspects of your submission need to be original; the key is simply to be as clear as possible about the nature of your piece's contribution to the literature.

5. Clearly state your arguments and the logical structure of your piece at the outset.

It is enormously helpful to preview your arguments and your support for these arguments at the beginning of the piece. You should also refer to the roadmap at various junctures throughout the submission, so that the reader knows where you are. More generally, try to be very clear about what you are claiming and how you are supporting your specific claims.

6. Present and engage with counterarguments.

Some of the strongest submissions are the pieces that take the 'other side' seriously and reply convincingly to objections. In addition, you should avoid responding to counterarguments in a perfunctory or dismissive way; instead, you should wrestle with them and try to show why, all things considered, your approach remains superior. Common counterarguments include: a view is internally inconsistent; not enough evidence exists to support a claim; a proposal would encounter significant difficulties if put into practice; an idea does not adequately consider a relevant value (say, fairness or efficiency).

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7. Follow proper citation style.

Our Journal is published in accordance with the Hong Kong Citation of Legal Authorities and Materials (HKCLAM), the first legal citation style domestically in Hong Kong.[2] Citation of materials not covered by HKCLAM follows the Oxford University Standard for the Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA).[3]

We occasionally receive submissions that are not complying with the above. While minor errors and deficiencies are acceptable (and expected), serious deviations from the HKCLAM and OSCOLA will unnecessarily put an onerous burden on our Editors, and this may be viewed detrimentally during the review and selection stage. Full versions of both are available online.

April 2026

[2] Wilson Lui, Faculty of Law, The University of Hong Kong, 'Hong Kong Citation of Legal Authorities and Materials' (*University of Hong Kong*, 18 March 2025) <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5173872> accessed 15 March 2026.

[3] Faculty of Law, University of Oxford, 'OSCOLA (Oxford University Standard for the Citation of Legal Authorities) Fifth Edition' (*University of Oxford*, 17 December 2025) <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/oscola_4th_edn_hart_2012.pdf> accessed 16 April 2026.