

ITSA Essay Competition 2026

Closing Date	5 October 2026
Eligibility	Inner Temple Student
Submit to	itsa@innertemplesocieties.org

Competition Question

"How are the digitalisation of the court process and the rapid advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI) likely to affect practice at the Bar?"

Submission

Submit to itsa@innertemplesocieties.org by the closing date.

Eligibility

You must meet the definition of an Inner Temple student set out in section 1 of the [ITSA Constitution](#).

Originality

Your essay must:

- Be your own original work, written specifically for this competition.
- Not be adapted from previously submitted coursework, journal articles, or other publications.
- Not have been peer reviewed or professionally edited.
- Be created without the use of generative AI tools.

Format

File format: Microsoft Word

Cover page: Completed application form

Anonymous essay: Do not include your name anywhere on the essay itself (excluding the cover page)

Font: Arial, 12 pt

Line Spacing: 1.5

Word Count

- Maximum 1,000 words.
- Any references or citations included in the main body of the essay count towards the word limit.
- Footnotes are excluded from the word count.
- No footnote may exceed 25 words.
- The bibliography is excluded from the word count.

Referencing

References must be cited using the OSCOLA referencing system.

Use of generative AI tools

Your essay must be entirely your own original work. Generative AI tools may be used only for research, proofreading, and spelling checks. If you choose to use AI, you remain responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any information or suggestions it provides.

You must not use generative AI tools, including ChatGPT or similar programmes, to write any part of your essay. Any entry found to have been written, in whole or in part, using generative AI will be excluded from the judging process and will be ineligible for the competition.

You must retain a record of all AI prompts or searches, together with the corresponding outputs. The organisers may carry out spot checks and request these records from selected entrants or otherwise investigate suspected unauthorised use of generative AI. Where appropriate, concerns may be referred to Inn or the entrant's higher education institution for consideration of potential academic or professional misconduct.

Note: This section has been adapted from the Bar Council's [Law Reform Essay Competition: Eligibility Criteria and Essay Rules](#).

Awards

Place	Prize
Winner	£150 voucher Practice pupillage interview (January 2027) Publication of the essay in the Yearbook and on Inner Temple's website
Runner-up	£100 voucher Practice pupillage interview (January 2027)
Second Runner-up	£50 voucher Practice pupillage interview (January 2027)

Announcement of Winners

The results will be announced at the ITSA Christmas Party in December 2026 and published on the Inner Temple website, social media, and any other communication channels chosen by the organisers.

Please visit the [ITSA Essay Competition page](#) on the Inner Temple website for the latest information and competition materials.

Judging Criteria

Criterion	Description	Weighting
Relevance to the Competition Question	The extent to which the essay addresses the question directly, remains focused throughout, and responds to all key aspects of the question.	20%
Analysis and Argument	The depth of analysis, development of the argument, critical engagement with the issues, logical reasoning, and well-reasoned conclusions.	20%
Structure and Organisation	The clarity and organisation of the essay, including its logical structure and progression of ideas.	20%
Quality of Writing (Clarity and Coherence)	The clarity, coherence, academic tone, and overall quality and effectiveness of the writing.	20%
Use of Sources and OSCOLA Referencing	The appropriate use of authorities and the accuracy and consistency of OSCOLA referencing.	10%
Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation	The accuracy and professionalism of the written work.	10%