



Lord Kerr Essay Competition 2024

Rules and Eligibility

Lord Brian Francis Kerr, Baron Kerr of Tonaghmore, PC was a Northern Irish barrister and a senior judge who was Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland and then a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom. At the time of his retirement, he was the longest-serving Supreme Court Justice and the last original member of the Court. Lord Kerr was an energetic courtroom interrogator who became an ardent defender of individual citizens' human rights. He was a progressive figure whose rulings advanced the rights of women and children and resolved controversies from the Troubles. He was proudest of the Court's 2018 ruling that eventually led to the decriminalisation of abortion in Northern Ireland. With other justices, he concluded that the Northern Ireland assembly's law on abortion was incompatible with human rights. Following his passing, the Human Rights Lawyers Association (HRLA) received a gift donation from his family to create an opportunity that celebrates the formidable legal career that Lord Kerr had through his influential judicial understanding of human rights and the law. From this gift, the HRLA and the Young Lawyers Committee (YLC) have created an essay competition that focuses on a contemporary human rights issue.

On the following page, you will find the rules of eligibility, the essay question, and the submission process for the 2024 Lord Kerry Essay Competition.

If you have any questions, concerns, or require any accommodations please contact the YLC via email at hrla.younglawyers@gmail.com.

**Sincerely,
2024/25 Young Lawyers Committee**

Question

“Should the rights to freedom of expression and assembly protect disruptive protests?”

Length

No more than 2000 words, including references.

Eligibility & Rules

1. Should not exceed 2000 words (including references).
2. Must be original, unpublished work.
3. Must be written in English.
4. Must be written in legible font and size.
5. Any referencing style can be used, and references should be in the form of footnotes at the bottom of each page, not in the body of the text or as endnotes. The same referencing style must be consistently used throughout the essay.
6. The title of the essay should be centred, in bold, and underlined.
7. The author’s name (but no further information) should appear at the end of the essay on the right-hand side of the page.
8. You may submit if you are UK-based and a:
 - a. University undergraduate or graduate;
 - b. Law undergraduate or graduate;
 - c. GDL student or graduate or;
 - d. Masters, BPTC, and LPC/SQE student.
9. This competition is not open to those who have been offered pupillage, law apprenticeships, legal traineeships, or training contracts.

Submission Process

1. The essay and the Essay Application Form are to be submitted via Google Form.
2. All submissions are final and cannot be re-submitted even if the deadline has not passed.
3. Submissions will be anonymised with a numeric candidate ID for blind marking by the essay administration team before being passed along to competition judges. Identifying details will be redacted from the essay.

Timeline

All entries must be received by 23rd May 2024, 11:59pm. Any entries received after the deadline will be rejected. Entrants will be informed of the outcome of their entry in July 2024.

Judges and Marking

Essay submissions will go through two judging sifts. The first sift will aim to narrow submissions which will then be passed on to senior practitioners and judges. The judging panel will comprise esteemed lawyers, practitioners, academic experts and campaigners with subject-matter expertise.

Rubric

Judges will be evaluating essays for:

1. Grammar
2. Organisation
3. Strong analysis and thinking
4. Originality and clarity of content and ideas

Please see the end of this document to consult the judging rubric in detail.

Prizes

Winner (1)

1. £300 to the winner.
2. Free annual membership to the Human Rights Lawyers' Association.
3. Copy of "The Judicial Mind: A Festschrift for Lord Kerr of Tonaghmore" edited by: Brice Dickson, Conor McCormick.
4. Publication of the essay on the UK Supreme Court blog.
5. Further prizes to be confirmed.

Runners-Up (2)

1. £100 to each of the runners-up.
2. Free annual membership to the Human Rights Lawyers' Association.
3. Essay published with photo and biography of runners-up on the Human Rights Lawyers' Association website for one year.
4. Written feedback to be provided to the runners-up.

Essay Event

We will also be hosting an event with the HRLA to celebrate the essay winner as well as have further keynote and panel discussions on the topic of the essay. The essay winner and runners-up can read sections of their writing and discuss the paper. The event will also have a keynote speaker, words from Lord Kerr's family, and a brief lecture (or panel) related to the essay topic, followed by an informal networking session.

The essay event is likely to be hosted in July in London. Due notice will be given to ensure attendance is possible for the winner and runners-up.

Judge/Marker:

Candidate Number:

Score:

Criteria	5 <i>Excellent</i>	4 <i>Above Average</i>	3 <i>Average</i>	2 <i>Below Average</i>	1 <i>Poor/Incomplete</i>
<p>Understanding of the topic: To what extent did the author demonstrate a clear understanding of the question and respond with relevant details and examples?</p>	<p>Key concepts related to the question and the topic are identified and fully defined; excellent use of critical writing techniques such as comparison and contrast.</p>	<p>Key concepts related to the question and the topic are adequately identified and defined; average use of critical writing techniques to describe viewpoints.</p>	<p>Key concepts are partially identified and defined; a statement that viewpoints exist but little use of supporting details and examples.</p>	<p>Some concepts are identified but not defined; lack of reference to any viewpoints.</p>	<p>Complete lack of reference to the question and the topic; irrelevant information; unsupported statements, incomplete details.</p>
<p>Originality, original thinking relative to the topic, and strength of ideas: To what extent was the original thinking relative to the subject?</p>	<p>Entirely original and relative to the topic with an insightful, unique, and complex insight into the topic.</p>	<p>Mostly relative to the topic without errors. Formulates a thought-provoking, well developed, and relatively original position on an issue.</p>	<p>Partially relative with minor errors. Author takes a clear position on an issue, though it is not developed fully.</p>	<p>Somewhat relative with significant errors. Author's position is evident, though it is vague.</p>	<p>Not relative to the topic at all. Fails to take a clear position, or the author contradicts themselves.</p>
<p>Effectiveness in presenting a point-of-view: To what extent did the author present their point of view, and how well do evidence and reasoning support it?</p>	<p>Point-of-view is fully presented and supported by many facts. Provides unique and insightful specific reasons and/or evidence demonstrating a deep and well-thought-out understanding and insight into the topic.</p>	<p>Point-of-view presented and supported with some facts. Provides some specific reasons and/or evidence that demonstrate understanding and insight of the topic.</p>	<p>Point-of-view expressed but limited use of factual information. Offers adequate – though perhaps vague or incomplete – supporting reasons and/or evidence.</p>	<p>Point-of-view presented without the use of supporting facts/opinion only. Provides less than adequate or contradictory reasons or evidence to support their position.</p>	<p>Facts are inaccurate. Point of view not present. Offers only general reasons or evidence or none, or offers evidence contradictory to the essay's thesis or main idea.</p>
<p>Organisation: To what extent is the essay written in a clear, organised, and structured manner?</p>	<p>Details are placed in a logical order, and the way they are presented <i>effectively</i> keeps the reader's interest and engagement. The essay is written in a straightforward way for a general audience to understand and read through effortlessly.</p>	<p>Details are placed in a <i>primarily</i> logical order, and the way they are presented <i>generally</i> keeps the reader's interest and engagement. The essay is written relatively easily for a general audience to understand and read through effortlessly.</p>	<p>Details are <i>partially</i> placed in a logical order, but the way they are presented <i>sometimes</i> make the writing less enjoyable. A general audience may be able to understand with some further explanation or second reading.</p>	<p>Some details are not in a logical or expected order, and this <i>distracts</i> the reader. A general audience would struggle to follow and understand even after multiple readings and further explanations.</p>	<p>There is no clear introduction of the main topic or structure of the paper. A general audience would be unable to follow and understand the essay, and even an expert audience has found the argument difficult to follow.</p>
<p>Writing style, grammar, and spelling: To what extent does the essay show a good command of English writing conventions?</p>	<p>The writing style is completely clear and compelling, with excellent grammar and spelling—varied sentence structure, essay well developed and cohesive. <i>Superb command</i> of conventions exhibited. Appropriate and diverse word choice and varied sentence structure.</p>	<p>The writing style is partially clear and compelling, with good grammar & spelling. Sentence structure somewhat varied; essay well developed and cohesive. <i>Command</i> of conventions exhibited. Creative word choice and varied sentence structure.</p>	<p>Use of writing techniques to convey main ideas but lacking clarity. Sentence structure lacks variety, but the essay is mostly developed. <i>Correct</i> use of grammar and conventions (for the most part).</p>	<p>Lacks use of writing techniques. Many errors in grammar and spelling. Weak control of grammar and conventions. Errors distracting.</p>	<p>Irrelevant and/or erroneous information, main ideas unclear, illegible, grammar, and spelling errors consistent throughout the essay. The use of grammar and conventions interferes with understanding.</p>