

ADMISSIONS HANDBOOK

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THE EUROPEAN LAW STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION | IE LAW SCHOOL

Article I. Overview

Dear Admissions Committee Members,

Welcome to the ELSA IE Admissions Committee Handbook. This handbook serves as your comprehensive guide through the process of evaluating and selecting the newest members of the European Law Students' Association at IE Law School. As committee members, you play a pivotal role in shaping the future of our association by ensuring that we continue to welcome individuals who not only excel academically but also embody the values and spirit of ELSA.

Section 1.01 Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is twofold:

- (a) It offers clear guidelines and procedures for the admissions process, ensuring consistency and fairness in evaluating each application.
- (b) It acts as a valuable resource for understanding the criteria and standards ELSA IE upholds in its selection process, aiding you in making informed decisions.

Section 1.02 Overview of the Admissions Process

The admissions process is a critical component of our association's growth and development. It involves several key stages, each requiring careful attention and thoughtful consideration:

- (a) Detailed examination of each application, focusing on academic achievements, extracurricular involvement, and alignment with ELSA's values.
- (b) Conducting interviews and other assessments to gauge the candidates' competencies, motivations, and fit with ELSA's culture.
- (c) Collaborative decision-making based on a holistic review of all application materials and interview outcomes.
- (d) Communicating decisions to applicants and facilitating the integration of new members into the association.

Section 1.03 Our Commitment to Excellence and Diversity

At ELSA IE, we are committed to maintaining a high standard of excellence and fostering a diverse and inclusive community. We seek individuals who are not only academically gifted but also bring diverse perspectives, ideas, and experiences to our association. As a committee member, your insights are vital in ensuring that our admissions process reflects these commitments.

Section 1.04 Your Role and Responsibilities

Your role as a committee member is both a privilege and a responsibility. It involves:

- (a) Upholding the integrity and values of ELSA IE.
- (b) Engaging in a fair and unbiased review of applications.
- (c) Participating actively in discussions and decision-making processes.
- (d) Respecting the confidentiality of applicant information.
- (e) Contributing to the continuous improvement of the admissions process.

Article II. The Committee and Process

The admissions committee should be comprised of a minimum of five members. The five members **must not** include the president, secretary general, and treasurer. The members will serve on the committee until the expiry of their term. The committee should meet at least one time following the deadline to process applications. The committee should review all applications by following this guidebook.

Section 2.01 Initial Individual Review:

- (a) Committee members will first independently evaluate applications, assigning a status of "YES," "NO," or "FOR REVIEW" based on the applicant's qualifications against established criteria.
- (b) Applications receiving a unanimous "YES" from all committee members will be automatically admitted without further discussion.
- (c) Applications marked as "FOR REVIEW" will be treated as "NO" to prompt a full committee discussion.
- (d) Applicants who do not satisfy the minimum criteria receive an automatic dismissal. See *Section 3.01*.

Section 2.02 Committee Discussion and Voting:

- (a) Applicants with any "NO" or "FOR REVIEW" statuses will be collectively reviewed in a meeting where each case is presented and discussed.
- (b) Each AC member is granted one vote per candidate, and all members must be physically present to vote, ensuring direct accountability and participation in the decision-making process.
- (c) Votes from all members carry equal weight, with no allowance for proxy voting or weighted votes.

Section 2.03 Decision Threshold:

- (a) Voting may not take place unless the chair, vice chair, and at least one additional voting member is physically present.
- (b) A majority vote, defined as more than half of the present voting members, is necessary to admit a candidate.
- (c) In the event of a tie, the Chairperson of the AC is provided a deciding vote to resolve the stalemate.

Section 2.04 Voting Integrity:

- (a) Voting shall be conducted in a manner that upholds each member's right to an independent judgment, free from the influence of others.
- (b) The President may be present for the process but may not cast a vote or state any opinions pertaining to the applications.

Section 2.05 Confidentiality:

- (a) Strict confidentiality is mandatory for all AC members. Details regarding candidate information, meeting deliberations, and voting results are not to be disclosed externally.
- (b) A breach of confidentiality can result in disciplinary action as per the organization's policies.

Section 2.06 Conflicts of Interest:

- (a) Members must disclose any potential conflicts of interest with applicants.
- (b) Members with a conflict must recuse themselves from both the discussion and the voting on the relevant candidate to maintain the integrity of the process.

Section 2.07 Documentation and Record-Keeping:

- (a) Detailed minutes of the meetings, including the discussion points and anonymized vote counts for each candidate, will be recorded for accountability and future reference.
- (b) The AC will periodically review these records to assess the fairness and effectiveness of the admissions process and implement improvements as needed.

Section 2.08 Training and Consistency:

- (a) All AC members will receive training on the admissions procedures and ethical guidelines to ensure consistency in the application of the review process.
- (b) Regular refresher sessions will be conducted to keep the committee aligned with any updates or changes to the process.

Article III. Minimum Requirements and Review

The admissions committee is committed to a holistic review of each application, recognizing that a candidate's potential and readiness for admission can be demonstrated in a variety of ways beyond academic metrics. Nevertheless, academic performance remains a significant indicator of a candidate's preparedness for rigorous academic work.

Section 3.01 Minimum GPA Requirement

- (a) The Chair of the Admissions Committee is authorized to set a minimum GPA threshold for eligibility based on the current applicant pool's statistics.
- (b) This minimum GPA will be determined as the lower 20% threshold of the average GPA of all applicants, ensuring that the bar is reflective of the competitive landscape of the current cycle.
- (c) The minimum GPA shall serve as a criterion for immediate disqualification to manage the volume of applications, ensuring that the committee's efforts are focused on candidates who meet the baseline academic standards.
- (d) The minimum GPA for disqualification will not exceed a 7.9 on a 10-point scale, in alignment with the inclusive admissions policy and to ensure that candidates who have demonstrated reasonable academic success are given due consideration.

Section 3.02 Legal and Academic Writing

- (a) Written legal papers submitted by candidates should demonstrate analytical ability, legal reasoning, and proficiency in written communication.
- (b) The committee will assess the substance, clarity, organization, and persuasiveness of the arguments presented in the legal papers.
- (c) Originality of thought and depth of insight will be valued over mere technical proficiency.

Section 3.03 Assessment of Grades

- (a) While GPA is a key academic indicator, the committee recognizes that it is not the sole measure of an applicant's capabilities or potential.
- (b) The GPA will be evaluated in the context of the difficulty of the coursework undertaken and the academic reputation of the institution attended.
- (c) An upward trajectory in academic performance will be viewed favorably, as will a rigorous selection of courses relevant to legal studies.

Section 3.04 Evaluation of Resumes:

- (a) Resumes should provide a comprehensive overview of the candidate's experiences, including any work, internships, volunteer activities, and achievements.
- (b) The committee will look for evidence of leadership, commitment to service, and the ability to balance academic and extracurricular commitments.
- (c) The clarity, organization, and professionalism of the resume presentation will also be considered.

Section 3.05 Personal Statements:

- (a) Personal statements are an opportunity for candidates to convey their unique story, motivations for pursuing a legal career, and any personal attributes or life experiences that contribute to their perspective.
- (b) The committee will consider the authenticity of the voice, the depth of reflection, and the ability to communicate effectively and persuasively.
- (c) While personal statements are important, they are not the primary factor in the admission decision and should complement, not overshadow, academic and professional qualifications.

Section 3.06 Review of Justifications, Recommendations, and Supplementary Materials:

- (a) Any justifications provided for variances in academic performance or other aspects of the application will be reviewed for context.
- (b) Letters of recommendation should support the candidate's readiness for legal study through specific examples and detailed assessments.
- (c) Supplementary materials, such as additional personal statements, explanations, or endorsements, are welcomed but should not detract from the primary application components.

Section 3.07 Weighting:

- (a) Each component of the application- GPA, resume, and written legal papers- will be given equal weight during the review process. The admissions committee recognizes the importance of a balanced assessment, where no single aspect disproportionately influences the overall decision.
- (b) Personal statements, justifications, and letters of recommendation will be considered as supplementary materials, offering additional context and depth to the applicant's file. These components can provide valuable insights into an applicant's character, resilience, and potential to contribute positively to the legal community.
- (c) It is essential that the committee members evaluate these supplementary materials without allowing them to overshadow the core components of the application. While they may enhance an understanding of the applicant, they should not be the deciding factor in the admission decision unless they highlight exceptional circumstances that significantly impact the committee's assessment of an applicant's readiness and suitability for legal studies.
- (d) In instances where the supplementary materials raise significant concerns or questions about an applicant's suitability for admission, these concerns should be discussed thoroughly in the committee meeting to ensure a fair and informed decision-making process.
- (e) The committee must be vigilant to avoid bias, ensuring that all applicants are evaluated based on the merit of their application, and not on any single element, whether it is a numerical score or an element of their personal narrative.

Article IV. Post-Decision Procedures and Appeals Guidelines

Section 4.01 Decision Presentation:

- (a) Once the admissions committee finalizes its decisions, a formal presentation of the accepted and rejected candidates must be made to the President, Secretary-General, and Treasurer.
- (b) This presentation includes a summary of each candidate's application and the rationale for the committee's decision.

Section 4.02 Executive Review:

- (a) The President, Secretary-General, and Treasurer hold the authority to review the committee's rejections.
- (b) They may reverse any rejection decisions with a majority vote among them.
- (c) They may not overturn an accepted member.

Section 4.03 Notification of Decisions:

- (a) The President or Director of Membership is responsible for conveying acceptance notifications to successful candidates. This communication should be positive and welcoming, providing next steps for the new members to integrate into the organization.
- (b) The VP for Human Resources is tasked with conveying rejection notifications. These communications should be respectful and encouraging, possibly providing general feedback or suggestions for improvement where appropriate.

Section 4.04 Appeals Process:

- (a) Rejected candidates have the right to appeal the decision of the admissions committee. The appeals process should be clearly outlined in the rejection notification and made available on the organization's website or admissions materials.
- (b) The appeals are handled by an Ethics team, chaired by the Secretary-General, to ensure an unbiased review of the appeals.
- (c) The appellant must submit a formal written appeal within a specified time frame after receiving their rejection notification. This appeal should clearly state the grounds for the appeal and include any additional supporting documentation or information that the candidate believes should be considered.
- (d) The Ethics team will review the submitted appeal and may request further information from the candidate or the admissions committee.
- (e) After thorough review, the Ethics team will present the appeal, along with their recommendation, to the entire board for a vote.
- (f) A 2/3 majority vote of the full board is required to overturn the admissions committee's decision. This high threshold ensures that only appeals with significant merit and board consensus result in a change of status for the applicant.
- (g) The decision of the board on the appeal is final. Candidates will be notified in writing of the outcome of their appeal.