

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Class of 2027  
**From:** Marta Krason and David Wang, Topic Access & Recruitment Editors, *The University of Chicago Law Review*  
**Date:** July 15, 2025  
**Re:** Candidacy for v93 *Law Review* Membership via Topic Access

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Thank you for your interest in the Topic Access Program! The Topic Access Program offers an alternative path to membership on the *The University of Chicago Law Review* for students who did not participate in the Writing Competition or were not offered membership through that process. Students selected through the Topic Access Program will have the same responsibilities as their peers accepted through the Writing Competition. It is the goal of the Topic Access Program to help qualified candidates join the *Law Review* (and to have some fun along the way!). **If you have questions, please contact the Topic Access & Recruitment Editors (TAEs), Marta Krason (martakrason.uclr@gmail.com) and David Wang (dwanguclr@gmail.com).** Should you wish to consider or begin the process, either Marta or David will serve as your primary contact and will work closely with you as you complete the process.

The Topic Access Program consists of two parts that aim to measure candidates' readiness to carry out the duties of a staffer on the *Law Review*. Staffers on the *Law Review* contribute to the journal in three main ways: (1) proposing a viable topic that can serve as the basis for a student Comment, (2) producing high-quality student scholarship, and (3) editing the work of academic authors during technical and substantive cite checks. The Topic Access Program first requires candidates to propose a legal topic that passes a preemption check and is broad enough for a 13,500-word piece. Second, candidates must demonstrate their ability to produce high-quality student scholarship through the development of a Comment. Third, candidates must show their ability to support academic authors by successfully completing a cite check. Candidates are also asked to submit a short Personal Statement. The following memorandum describes each of these parts, the program timeline, and additional important information. Please be aware that the following process is subject to some modification.

### I. THE COMMENT PROCESS

Candidates who seek to join the *Law Review* through the Topic Access Program undergo much of the same Comment process as new *Law Review* staffers. Comments are substantial pieces of legal writing that perform a critical evaluation or innovative reevaluation of a legal issue and provide a creative or novel approach to the problem. They go beyond research papers, which simply analyze existing issues, and litigation briefs, which merely take a position on an existing legal debate. The Comment process consists of (1) selecting a viable topic, (2) providing peer feedback on proposed topics, (3) developing an outline, and (4) completing a written Comment. Topic Access Program candidates will undergo the first three parts by producing two Topic Proposals, a Topic Analysis, and a Comment outline. Before starting a Comment outline, the *Law Review* Comments Team must approve the Topic Access candidate's topic. What each of these submissions entails is described briefly below; more information can be found in the Comments Manual. Marta and David will provide detailed instructions, guidance, and feedback to candidates at the start of and during the Topic Access process.

In addition to topic approval, candidates are evaluated for membership based on the quality of their work product during the Comment development process. **Importantly, offers for *Law Review***

membership via the **Topic Access Program** are made after **Comment outlines** are submitted.

Thus, candidates in the Topic Access Program are not required to submit a completed Comment unless they accept an offer of membership.

- **Topic Proposal (TP):** A TP is a four- to seven-page memorandum that states a candidate's proposed topic, provides a brief discussion of the topic and existing commentary, and concludes with a bibliography. Each candidate has the opportunity to submit two TPs proposing topics they generated. A candidate must have a topic approved in order to continue their candidacy in the Topic Access Program.
- **Topic Analysis (TA):** An approved TP will be peer reviewed by a *Law Review* staffer or Topic Access candidate to determine its viability as a Comment topic in a TA. A TA is a four- to seven-page memorandum that serves as a thorough assessment of a proposed topic. Each candidate will complete at least one TA on a different TP than their own. The TA includes a detailed preemption check, a critical second look at proposed solutions, and perhaps additional or alternative paths to resolving the issue. Each topic is again subject to approval after the TA process. If approved, the candidate will begin to develop their Comment outline.
- **Outline:** If a TA is approved, candidates must then write a five- to ten-page Comment outline. An outline should state a clear thesis and be detailed and thorough. Based on the Comment outline, the TAEs should be able to track all of the arguments, evaluate their support, and understand the direction in which a candidate wishes the Comment to go.

## II. THE CITE CHECK

Candidates in the Topic Access Program demonstrate their ability to support academic authorship by successfully completing a cite check. Cite checks typically span seven to eight days, during which candidates work to ensure the accuracy of each citation in a Comment, Article, Essay, or Book Review, while also editing for style and technical errors. Tasks include reading the piece, collecting cited sources, verifying the accuracy of citations, adding pincites, and completing other substantive or technical edits. Candidates are evaluated based on the quality of their cite check. More detailed guidance regarding cite checks is available in the Editing Manual, and Marta and David will provide further information to candidates at the start of and during the Topic Access Program.

## III. TIMELINE

The following is a tentative timeline of the 2025 Topic Access Program. Please keep in mind that the following deadlines are subject to change before the start of the Program. Marta and David will communicate any changes to those who express interest in the Program. While we expect no material changes to the dates below, please do not hesitate to reach out directly with any questions about the timeline.

Topic Access candidates are expected to turn in submissions by the relevant due date. Membership on a journal frequently entails strict deadlines, and this process is representative of the staffer experience. In an effort to provide structure and meaningful feedback to candidates, the Topic Access Program sets firm deadlines for submissions that closely mirror those given to staffers.

<b>Tentative Dates</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>Mid-July</b>	Sign Up Form for Topic Access Opens
<b>Sunday, July 27</b>	Deadline to Sign Up for Topic Access
<b>Sunday, August 10</b>	Complete and Submit Topic Proposal 1 to TAE for Approval
<b>Sunday, August 24</b>	Complete and Submit Topic Proposal 2 to TAE for Approval
<b>Sunday, September 7</b>	Complete and Submit a Topic Analysis
<b>Sunday, September 14</b>	Complete and Submit a Personal Statement
<b>October (exact dates TBD)</b>	Complete and Submit a Cite Check
<b>October (exact dates TBD)</b>	Comment Outline Due to TAE
<b>Late-October (exact date TBD)</b>	Offers for Membership Extended to Selected Candidates

#### IV. OTHER INFORMATION

##### A. Personal Statement

Topic Access Candidates are also asked to write a statement of no more than 500 words explaining how their life experiences, background, skills, professions, or interests would enable them to make a valuable contribution to the *Law Review*. Alternatively or in addition, candidates may explain why they are particularly interested in serving on the staff of the *Law Review*.

##### B. Confidentiality

Participation in the Topic Access Program is confidential. Candidates' work in the Comment development process is anonymized and will be evaluated blindly by the v93 Board. There is one limited exception: candidates are not anonymous to Marta and David. Accordingly, Marta and David do not vote on whether to extend *Law Review* membership offers to the candidates. To maintain anonymity, we strongly discourage people from talking to their peers about their participation in the Topic Access Program or otherwise making their participation public unless they are accepted on to the *Law Review*. Of course, candidates are more than welcome (and are, in fact, encouraged) to talk about their Comment topics with professors and other advisors.

##### C. Participation in Other Journals' Topic Access Programs

Candidates in the *Law Review*'s Topic Access Program may also participate in the Topic Access Programs of other journals. That is, the *Law Review* does not require that candidates exclusively participate in our Topic Access Program. However, individuals cannot simultaneously serve as a staffer on the *Law Review* and as a member of another journal. If a candidate accepts an offer of membership from another journal, that candidate will forfeit their candidacy for the *Law Review*, and vice versa.

While Topic Access Editors across all journals are seeking to coordinate timelines this year, we cannot guarantee that the *Law Review* will be able to extend an offer before a candidate must respond to an offer from another journal.

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If you have questions about the substance or timeline of the Topic Access Program, please reach out to Marta or David. Thank you for your interest in joining the *Law Review*! We look forward to working with those of you who embark upon this process!