

WRITING SAMPLE MANDATORY PRE-REVIEW CHECKLIST

The legal writing professors will help review your clerkship writing sample. Because of judge-imposed limitations on outside editing of writing samples, your faculty reviewer cannot proofread or line-edit your writing sample for you. Rather, your faculty reviewer will provide general feedback regarding the sample, point to examples of citation and grammatical errors, and direct you to areas needing clarification and further development. Your faculty reviewer may not be familiar with the substantive legal issues addressed in your document. Accordingly, the review will focus on style and readability, rather than substantive content. You must allow **ten business days** for the professor to complete his or her review.

To ensure the review is as helpful as possible, you must follow the steps outlined below before submitting your writing sample for review:

1. **Read your writing sample as if you were the judge.** Reread your document from start-to-finish to ensure the document provides a roadmap for the reader and follows that roadmap throughout the discussion and conclusion sections.
2. **Proofread your entire document.** Check for typographical, spelling and grammatical errors.
3. **Bluebook your entire document.** Ensure that your citations conform to the Bluebook citation format and that all assertions in the document are appropriately supported with source citations.
4. **Remove “legalese” and arcane language.** Lawyers, judges included, have largely moved away from using legalese and overly formal or arcane language. Replace legalese in your writing sample with clear, concise and modern language.
5. **Review the judge’s writing sample policy.** Some judges will only accept self-edited writing samples. Prior to submitting your sample for review, ensure that the judge will accept a writing sample that has been reviewed by a faculty member. If you are unsure of the judge’s writing sample policy, please ask CDO for assistance.
6. **Incorporate prior comments.** If your document was previously reviewed by an employer or another professor, review and incorporate his or her comments into your draft, as warranted.
7. **Fine-tune your analysis.** Reread your document to ensure that the writing sample represents your highest level of legal analysis. If the document was prepared as part of your first year legal writing curriculum, you may want to substantially rework the discussion section to showcase your improved analytical skills. Redraft confusing analysis and ensure appropriate transitions between points.
8. **Make it look good.** Format your document, standardize the font and spacing, ensure appropriate margins, and create a cover page.
9. **Once your writing sample is as perfect as you can make it, submit to Professor Rachel Suddarth:** rsuddart@richmond.edu. Allow ten business days to review.