

Frequently Asked Questions: ACS Writing Competitions

1. What are the writing competition opportunities provided to ACS students?

ACS has two writing competitions offered to students. The Constance Baker Motley (CBM) National Student Writing Competition seeks papers promoting a progressive view on a broad array of constitutional law topics. The submission deadline is February 7, 2021 at 11:59PM EST. The Richard D. Cudahy (RDC) Writing Competition seeks papers relating to American regulatory or administrative law, broadly construed. The submission deadline is February 7, 2021 at 11:59PM EST.

2. What is the range of topics for each writing competition?

The RDC competition requires the paper topic to involve administrative or regulatory law. While the CBM competition allows for a broad array of topics relating to constitutional law. Below is a list of topics to consider.

Civil Legal Aid	Labor Law
Civil Liberties	LGBTQ Rights
Consumer Rights	Privacy
Criminal Justice	Protection of Health, Safety, and the Environment
Disability Rights	Racial Equality
Role of State Attorneys General	Religion
Freedom of Speech	Second Amendment and Guns
Immigration	Separation of Powers and Federalism
Indigent Defense	Women's Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Freedom
Census Report	Voting and Political Process
Money in Politics (including Judicial Elections)	

3. What is the general difference between the Constance Baker Motley and Richard D. Cudahy writing competitions?

Applicants: CBM is a writing competition only for law students. RDC is a writing competition for both lawyers and law students. RDC divides the submissions into two categories: lawyer and law students. A winner is selected from each category.

Prizes: The winners of both writing competitions receive special recognition at the ACS National Convention. CBM selects three finalists. The winning finalist receives \$3000 and offer to publish in the University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law. The two runner-up finalists receive \$1000. RDC selects two finalists that each receives \$1500.

Format: The paper submissions for CBM should be a traditional law review article. The paper submissions for RDC could range from law review article to more journalistic, less academic, lightly cited essays written for a wider audience outside of the legal community.

4. What are the paper format requirements for the submissions?

CBM writing competition requires paper submissions to be 25 to 50 pages, including footnotes. The text must be double-spaced 12-point Courier font with 1-inch margins. The footnotes may be in single-spaced 10-point Courier font.

RDC writing competition requires paper submissions to be 25,000 words or less, not including footnotes. Shorter submissions are strongly encouraged. The paper must be in Word format and citations should appear in footnotes as oppose to endnotes.

5. Can I submit a paper that is already published?

CBM DOES NOT accept already published works. RDC DOES accept submissions that were previously published, if publication occurred no later than one year prior to the competition deadline. If submitting a paper that is either published or accepted for publication, the author should include written consent from the publication to allow its posting to the ACS website, with appropriate attribution.

6. Can I submit a paper that I am receiving academic course credit for?

Yes. A paper that received academic credit for a course could be submitted to both writing competitions. CBM requires the paper submission is written by a single author; therefore, no group papers or co-authorship by a professor is allowed.

7. What are the benefits to participating in the writing competitions?

The writing competitions have a panel of distinguished judges, academics, and practitioners reviewing the submissions. A student could remark on his or her participation when writing cover letters to clerkships or seeking recommendations.

8. Can I submit multiple submissions for each writing competition?

Yes. An author could submit multiple submissions for each writing competition.

9. Can primary or secondary sources, outside of case law, be used as research?

Yes. Primary or secondary sources that are not legal can be used in the paper submissions. Examples of alternative sources include statistics, policy briefs, social media related-sources, etc.

10. Do I need to be a student chapter leader to be eligible to submit a paper to the writing competitions?

No. The author does not have to be a student chapter leader. However, the student must be a current national member of the American Constitution Society to submit a paper. The national membership fee for students is \$10 for the year. Also, for CBM, the author must be either a full- or part-time law student currently enrolled in a J.D., L.L.M. or S.J.D program in a United States law school by the competition deadline.

