

HANDBOOK

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES



2024/2025



The European Law Students' Association



1. Foreword

Dear Academic Activities Officer,

Before you is a comprehensive overview of everything an AAer needs to know for a successful term.

This Handbook is designed to take you from zero to hero in all things AA: from the ELSA Law Review to Rule of Law Education, from planning your projects to transitioning your successor. Where it doesn't go in much detail, it always links to more extensive resources specific to the subject matter. It has been completely reimagined from scratch to match the most relevant developments in Academic Activities and the ELSA Network. The reason for this has been a turbulent half-decade for the Area. After full separation from Competitions on the international level, we went through multiple redefinitions, project reallocations, responsibility revisions and more. In short - Academic Activities has been looking for its identity and purpose for the last couple of years. Today, it is found, and it is in front of you.

The content of this handbook is a result of tireless work of hundreds of Officers who, throughout the years, did not waver in face of uncertainty - but instead stood stronger for the values they believe in, and did so together, as one. We have proven that the best way to **#MakeADifference** is always **#AllDifferentAllTogether**.

That being said, times change - and ELSA evolves from year to year. While this handbook is made to stand the test of time with minor revisions, I still advise that you take it with a grain of salt, and read it in conjunction with ELSA's current regulations and recent changes.

Even if you are unsure where to look and what to do, worry not: this Handbook is here to make sure you always **#ActToImpact**, everywhere you go.

ELSAfully yours,

Niko Anzulović Mirošević

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3. ELSA 101

3.1. Brief History

The European Law Students' Association (ELSA) is a non-political, non-profit, non-governmental organisation run by and for law students across Europe. It was founded in Vienna by five students from Austria, Hungary, Poland and West Germany on May, 4th 1981. ELSA was founded to foster international cooperation during the Cold War.

Over the decades, it expanded significantly, launching its first international office in Oslo in 1984 and introducing the STEP traineeship programme in 1985. Key developments include the creation of the Synergy Magazine in 1989, the adoption of its philosophy statement in 1992 : *“a just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity”*, and the relocation of its headquarters to the now famous ELSA House in Brussels in 1995. That same year, ELSA launched the International Focus Programme (IFP) to raise awareness of key legal issues across its network. In 2002, it established the ELSA Moot Court Competition on WTO Law, later renamed the John H. Jackson Moot Court. ELSA deepened its human rights focus with a partnership with the Council of Europe in 2008, followed by the launch of the Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition in 2012. In 2013, it introduced the first ELSA Day under the motto *“All different, all together”*, promoting human rights across Europe, and laying the groundwork to develop the Annual Human Rights Campaign. The ELSA Law Review was re-established in 2015 as a peer-reviewed, student-edited legal journal. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, ELSA adapted with major digital innovations, including fully digitising the Synergy Magazine. Launched in 2020, Rule of Law Education was created to address the growing erosion of democratic values in Europe. Initially developed by ELSA Alumni, it soon became an official Network-wide initiative. Since then, it has expanded to over a dozen countries, equipping High School students across Europe with vital legal and civic literacy.

3.2. Projects

ELSA offers a wide range of international and local projects designed to support the academic, professional, and personal development of its members. These initiatives provide unique opportunities to gain practical experience, deepen legal knowledge, and engage with global legal issues. Some of the key projects include: Rule of Law Education, Annual Human Rights Campaign, ELSA Law Review, Legal Research Groups, Essay Competitions, Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition, John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition, Academic & Moot Court Competitions, ELSA Traineeships, Legal Tandem, Lawyers@Work, ELSA Law Schools, ELSA Delegations, International Conferences of ELSA, ELSA Webinars and more.

3.3. Structure

At the international level, ELSA is led by the International Board, based at the ELSA House in Brussels. This executive body oversees the daily management of the association, represents ELSA on the global stage, and ensures the effective implementation of decisions made by the Council. The Board is composed of eight elected members, each corresponding to one of eight Areas of ELSA.

The four **Supporting Areas** consist of Board Management, External Relations & Expansion (President), Internal Management (Secretary General), Financial Management (Treasurer) and Marketing. The President is responsible for the strategic direction of the association, external representation at international events and meetings, and the development of partnerships and fundraising efforts. The Secretary General manages ELSA's internal structure, ensures smooth communication within the network, organises training sessions, and supports human resources development. The Treasurer is in charge of ELSA International's finances, including budgeting, accounting, financial reporting, and working on grants. Marketing is responsible for defining marketing strategies, creating promotional materials, managing ELSA's visual identity, and coordinating publications like the Synergy Magazine.

The four **Key Areas** focus on ELSA's core activities and are led by four Vice Presidents. Academic Activities coordinates legal research initiatives such as Legal Research Groups and the ELSA Law Review, as well as the AHRC and ROLE. Competitions oversees ELSA's moot court competitions, including the John H. Jackson and Helga Pedersen Moot Courts, and manages relations with external partners like the WTO. Professional Development runs the ELSA Traineeships programme and supports the professional growth of members through partnerships and career opportunities such as Career fairs and Legal Tandems. Lastly, Seminars and Conferences is responsible for events like ELSA Law Schools : Summer and Winter, webinars, study visits, and delegations to international institutions, embedding legal education and human rights into these projects.

The International Board is supported by the ELSA International Team, which includes Directors, Assistants, and Coordinators who contribute to specific projects and help carry out the Board's responsibilities. Additionally, the Internal Auditors, elected independently by the Council, review ELSA's financial records each year to ensure transparency and accountability.

On the national level, ELSA operates through National Groups, which are responsible for implementing ELSA's mission within their countries. Finally, Local Groups are established at law faculties to organise activities and projects on a more grassroots level. While the structure of National and Local Boards usually reflects that of the International Board and is divided into the same eight Areas, each group has the flexibility to organise itself in the way that best suits its national context.

3.4. Abbreviations

We use lots of abbreviations that are very useful to know as an Officer. You can find a list of the most important ones hereinafter. Refer to the [ELSA Lingo section of the ELSA Wiki](#) for the complete list:

- AA: Academic Activities
- AHRC: Annual Human Rights Campaign
- BEE: Board Management, External Relations and Expansion
- C: Competitions
- DB: Decision Book
- ELR: ELSA Law Review
- ICM: International Council Meeting
- IFP: International Focus Programme
- LRG: Legal Research Group
- NCM: National Council Meeting
- NB: National Board
- OYOP: One Year Operational Plan
- PD: Professional Development
- ROLE: Rule of Law Education
- S&C: Seminars and Conferences

We also have certain rules of writing when writing ELSA-related texts such as email, Action Plans, OYOPs, etc. Please see below and refer to the ELSA Wiki for more.

- **"ELSA"** shall be capitalised.
- **Names of the areas, projects and positions** : e.g. Marketing, Academic Activities, Key Areas, shall always be capitalised, Vice President in charge of Seminars & Conferences, Director for Advocacy shall always be capitalised. Also, e.g. Rule of Law Education or Annual Human Rights Campaign shall always be capitalised
- Make sure you use **British English** in your texts (pay special attention on using "s" instead of "z" e.g., "organisation" instead of "organization").
- You can use **"ELSAfully yours"** as a greeting in your emails.

3.5. Different Levels Of ELSA

ELSA operates on a three-tier structure. At the top is the International Level, led by the International Board of ELSA and supported by the ELSA International Team. They are responsible for coordinating the network globally and setting the strategic direction of the association.

Next is the National Level, where each country has its own National Board. These boards serve as a bridge between the international and local levels, providing support, guidance, and coordination for the national network.

Finally, we have the Local Level, made up of Local Groups based at universities or faculties. The number of Local Groups varies from country to country, but they are the heart of the association, organising events, engaging directly with students, and bringing ELSA's vision to life on campus.

3.6. Different Officer Ranks

On each level of ELSA, there exists a hierarchy of Officer ranks, from highest to lowest. This hierarchy is often mirrored on all levels, resulting in more or less consistent ranks of Officers that are immediately recognisable throughout the Network. These ranks, from highest to lowest, are:

- a) Supervisory Board Members / Auditors: While not directly involved in any of the decisions or their execution, their job is to monitor the work of all other Officers and report irregularities to their Councils.
- b) Executive Board Members - Responsible for setting direction, planning the year and leading a team in execution. They have executive decision-making power.
- c) Directors: Largely independently responsible for specific tasks or projects within the area, according to the decisions of their Board Member and under their supervision
- d) Coordinators: A middle step between Directors and Assistants, they serve to further delegate the work when it's divisible by some principle. They usually only exist in larger and more complex teams, divided by type of work or geographical area
- e) Assistants: Usually largest in number and present everywhere, they execute decisions and complete tasks based on the instructions of their superiors. Coaches, Editors and similar positions are also generally sorted under this category.

This structure helps ensure efficient delegation and allows for broader member involvement in the work of ELSA.

4. Academic Activities As An Area

Yes, you read that right: AAAAA.

4.1. Definitions And Identity

Academic Activities is the Key Area of ELSA that primarily aims to contribute to social responsibility and legal education of law students and young lawyers by organising projects that focus on acting for the good of society, advocacy, and legal skills.

Academic Activities projects are projects where participants acquire knowledge and skills through campaigns, non-formal education programmes, legal writing activities.

Projects within Academic Activities include Legal Research Groups, the ELSA Law Review, essay competitions, the Annual Human Rights Campaign, and the Rule of Law Education (ROLE) Programme. These initiatives help participants strengthen their academic writing, critical thinking, and legal reasoning.

Academic Activities also offers space for creativity. Officers are encouraged to develop new projects that enhance legal knowledge and skills, as long as they follow the principles of non-formal education.

Importantly, this area carries ELSA's mission of social responsibility. Initiatives like ROLE and ELSA4Schools aim to make complex legal concepts accessible to young students through non formal-education and promote civic education as well as inspire future generations to engage actively with the rule of law and human rights.

4.2. Main Foci

According to the definitions above, we can see that there are two main foci that shape AA's identity: legal education and social responsibility.

Despite the area's name which would only suggest the former, these are two equally important aspects of the area. As the definition is open, any projects fulfilling one (or better yet, both) of these priorities can be organised within Academic Activities.

Thus, as an AAer, your "identity" is twofold: on the one hand, you are primarily in charge of any and all projects that strongly focus on education, writing and creation of academic materials in general. This will materialise in the form of longer or shorter publications, any workshops or education on how to better write/speak or enhance other academic skills etc. On the other hand, you are also primarily in charge of all activity of your Group that has for its primary intended effect positive impact on the wider population outside of just lawyers and law

students. AA is unique in that regard, as all of our other projects mostly focus only on our primary target group. This external effect of ELSA's projects in AA is often realised through education of high school students and running advocacy and awareness campaigns through various events, but can also take other forms.

4.2.1. Legal Education

Academic Activities originated as the core area dedicated to bridging the gap between classroom theory and practical application. This goal has been pursued through initiatives such as publications, workshop, competitions, professional skill development and similar projects.

Following many changes and the redistribution of projects among the areas, Academic Activities continues to uphold its commitment to legal education. At the heart of this mission are the Legal Writing projects, which remain the academic foundation of the area and ELSA in general.

4.2.2. Social Responsibility

Although the board reform in 2020 and other changes led to a reduction in certain academic projects within the area, they simultaneously highlighted Academic Activities as the leading area for promoting social responsibility.

Social Responsibility initiatives are projects that aim to make ELSA members more conscious about their community and to ensure the Association's positive impact on society (Decision Book, Part 6, Chapter 6).

These initiatives are about using our legal background and knowledge to give back to society, to engage meaningfully with the world. They are all about impacting the world outside of our main target group.

4.2.2.1. Advocacy

As part of ELSA's broader commitment to social responsibility, advocacy plays a key role in raising awareness of critical societal issues and encouraging action within our Network.

The term *advocacy* is widely used by youth NGOs and as a general term to describe efforts aimed at advancing a specific agenda and influencing policymaking. While the ELSA Network has the potential to be a strong voice for policy change, our advocacy work remains rooted in the Association's non-political character.

In ELSA, we define advocacy as the process of raising awareness on pressing societal issues through demonstrated objective data within relevant audiences to implement actions that contribute to a specific goal e.g. effective humanitarian action.

4.2.2.2. Human Rights

As an organisation committed to the promotion of human rights, ELSA shall be continuously committed to raising awareness and providing education on human rights.

ELSA shall set out focus topics that require special attention from the perspective of human rights. In doing so, we strive to be recognised for a strictly legal, academic, fact-based and impartial approach to these topics.

Within this framework, Academic Activities serves as the main area addressing human rights, primarily through the Annual Human Rights Campaign, as well as various national and local human rights-related projects.

4.2.2.3. Rule Of Law

This same commitment applies to the Rule of Law. ELSA is equally dedicated to identifying focus topics that deserve attention through the lens of rule of law, and to addressing them with the same legal, academic, and impartial standards as with human rights.

Academic Activities upholds this commitment through Rule of Law Education, which is coordinated by ELSA International and implemented by National and Local Groups across the Network.

5. You As An AAer

When you are elected/appointed to a position in AA, you are not only joining your Group's Board/team - you are also becoming part of a "vertical" fAAmily - all AAers of the ELSA Network work, grow and develop together.

5.1. Your Role In ELSA

You are the academic, the bookworm, the nerd. But you are also the activist, the voice, the leader of change, the catalyst of new generations. As an AAer, you bridge the gap between the oldest, most traditional projects and values of ELSA (academic excellence and legal writing), and our newest, most forward-looking and most widely impactful initiatives for societal change (advocacy, human rights, rule of law, youth-to-youth education).

Unlike other Key Areas which are defined relatively more uniformly, our explicit twofold identity may sometimes create confusion. It is your primary challenge and responsibility to implement, live and convey the AA conundrum clearly and passionately - making potential new Officers not intimidated, but impressed and engaged.

On the one hand, it is your task to maintain ELSA's presence in your city/country as an association that encourages and bolsters academic excellence. While your S&Cer is going to throw around all the conferences and social events and your PDer is going to be all things traineeships, you are there to ground ELSA. Ground it in legal knowledge, in academia, in learning of sound legal thinking and argumentation. This can sometimes be overlooked due to many social and other events ELSA organises. Thus, it is you, the AAer, that must constantly remind your stakeholders and environment that ELSA is not just for networking and events. While you keep our tradition through Legal Writing and academic workshops, keep in everyone's minds that we respect and upholds the traditional importance of legal and academic excellence.

On the other hand, other than grounding ELSA, ironically enough you are also the main person responsible for making it fly, as high as it can. ELSA's proactivity in advocacy, human rights, youth education and societal change is in your hands. While the projects of all other Key Areas are defined through form, your peers are focused on formulated execution and making sure all the organisational boxes are filled. However, your projects focus on substance, content, message, impact and are more free in form. You are the open-minded thinker, you are ELSA's voice for change. You are the main one responsible not only to make your own projects loud and impactful, but also those of your peers. While you push our message through ROLE and AHRC, make sure to also pay attention to all the ELSA Traineeships, Law Schools and Competitions running around you - and guide them to more strongly realise ELSA's mission of promoting a just world.

5.2. Your Responsibilities

You are responsible for leading/implementing AA at your level. This primarily means the following responsibilities:

- Being acquainted with existing Flagship Projects, and International Projects of ELSA in the AA area, and considering to organise (at least some of) them
- Being acquainted and complying with the regulations of ELSA on all levels
- Being acquainted and complying with the Part 6 of the International Council Meeting Decision Book
- Regularly following the communication with ELSA International through the mailing list, WhatsApp groups, Open Calls and more
- Organising/participating in any local/national communication and/or meetings in AA
- Contributing to your Board/Group
- Organising AA projects
- Together with BEE, leading your Group's Advocacy
- Guiding other Key Areas to implement Advocacy, Social Responsibility, Human Rights and the Rule of Law
- Delivering Transition

Exact responsibilities will of course vary depending on your Group's size, traditions and your exact position, and you should always consult all specific sources. But, always keep in mind you are part of the fAAmily: other AAers from ELSA International or anywhere else in the Network are there for you if you need help, just like you are there for them.

5.3. Mental Framework

As an officer, it is completely normal to sometimes feel like others might know more than you. Imposter syndrome can creep in, especially when you are surrounded by talented peers. But if you are reading this, know that this is usually not true. What some Officers know in one area, they will lack in another, where you will shine. You just might not notice it straight away. It is important to always keep your head up and stand your ground when working in ELSA, interacting with externals and other Officers.

Stay humble, stay authentic, and never be afraid to ask questions. No one expects you to know everything, but your willingness to learn, grow, and collaborate will make all the difference.

Remember: leadership is not about having all the answers, it is about being brave enough to keep seeking them.

5.4. Effective Communication

Effective communication is at the heart of every successful team, project, and leadership role. It is not just about speaking clearly, it is about listening actively, expressing ideas with purpose, and creating an environment where everyone feels heard and understood.

In any role, especially as an officer, the ability to communicate openly and respectfully builds trust, prevents misunderstandings, and strengthens collaboration. Whether you are sharing a vision, giving feedback, or resolving a conflict, clear communication ensures that goals are aligned and progress stays on track. Ultimately, it is the bridge between ideas and action, and the foundation of any lasting success.

Always make the effort to stay in regular contact with your team, members, and fellow officers. Strong teams are built on trust and connection, and that starts with communication.

When challenges arise, whether personal or professional, do not keep them to yourself. Addressing issues early and clearly is key in ensuring a successful project/year. Without open communication, even the best intentions can lead to confusion, frustration, and burnout.

By being honest and proactive, you help create a supportive and resilient team culture, one that is equipped to succeed no matter what.

5.5. Useful Tools

There are plenty of resources available to support you throughout your term, knowing where to find them is the key to succeeding in your role. The most basic one is the general ELSA website: www.elsa.org

ELSA has a non-profit license to use Google Workspace. This means that ELSA International and all National and Local Groups are entitled to the use of Google's premium tools, email addresses, drive storage and more on the elsa.org domain. If your Group is not using Google Workspace and you would like to, don't hesitate to contact ELSA International.

The most useful and important one is the [Officer's Portal](#). This is your go-to platform for all essential materials, including handbooks, templates, regulations, minutes from ICMs, marketing kits, etc. You can find this handbook there for easy reference.

You also have access to the [ELSA Wiki](#), which contains a lot of useful information. Keep in mind that it should exclusively be used for general ELSA knowledge and **NOT for anything AA-related**, as it is extremely outdated at the time of publication of this Handbook, and will certainly guide you wrong, creating problems.

Do not forget to consult the Decision Book, ELSA's official regulatory document containing the definitions and regulations of every project and activity we organise. Familiarising yourself with it is essential to understand the rules, procedures and standards you are expected to uphold when organising initiatives, managing your team or representing ELSA externally. You can find the Decision Book [here](#), under Regulations.

In addition, never hesitate to reach out to your National or International Officer; Whether you are facing a challenge, looking for advice or just unsure about something, they are here for you; They took on these roles because they are passionate about ELSA, Academic Activities and about supporting others. Use their experience to your advantage.

Finally, do not forget about the Alumni Network, whether it is from your Local, National or International Board. These are people who were once part of the association and in your shoes, who may have faces similar situation and struggles. Reach out, ask questions and learn from their experiences.

Remember, you are never alone in your role - ELSA is an immense network and that is our singular biggest strength!

5.6. Academic Activities Specificities

5.6.1. Recent Developments In Academic Activities

Following the board reform, AA entered a period of uncertainty about its portfolio and strategic focus. In recent years, however, ELSA International has clarified this by revitalising key projects, giving AA a stronger identity and direction within the Network.

A major milestone was the revival of the **ELSA Law Review**. After years of inactivity, the publication of the ELR **Legacy Edition** in May 2025, featuring articles from previous terms, marked a turning point. The project has since resumed with a new editorial cycle.

In **Rule of Law Education**, a unified visual identity significantly improved marketing and cohesion. Since the first **ROLE Training Conference** in 2023, two more editions have taken place. Importantly, organisers can now benefit from **EYF subgrant funding**, enabling them to run and expand National Editions.

The **Annual Human Rights Campaign** has evolved with formalised release of **Supporting Materials**, now a regulated obligation in the Decision Book. The **AHRC Competition** is more structured and visible, with clearer guidelines and stronger professionalism. Notably, the Competition now awards a **traineeship for the AHRC winner at the Council of Europe**, boosting the campaign's prestige and motivation.

5.6.2. Informalities

Every area in ELSA has their own traditions, internal jokes and signs of recognition. Feel free to ask your predecessors, superiors or other ELSA Officers in the Network to introduce you.

6. Academic Activities Projects

AA projects fulfil one or both of the aforementioned foci, by providing learning and engagement opportunities for law students, young lawyers and/or the wider public.

6.1. Focus

The focus of AA is targeted at its Flagship and international projects. All Officers should aim to organise, participate and encourage participation in these projects as their primary task. This way, we ensure a unified targeted impact across Europe by uniting in a very precise and coordinated way. In turn, prioritising the organisation of International/Flagship projects of ELSA not only strengthens us externally as a force of good towards the world, but also brings us closer together in shared issues, planning, discussions on common goals and more - rather than having everyone fend for themselves.

Your biggest strength as an ELSA Officer is ALWAYS the size, expertise and coordination of the entire ELSA Network, and this is best expressed and realised through the realisation of International/Flagship Projects of ELSA.

6.2. Flagship Projects Of ELSA

According to the Decision Book, Part 1, Chapter 7: *"The Flagship Projects of ELSA are well-established projects of key importance to the National Groups and ELSA International, organised and/or coordinated by ELSA International."*

Flagship Projects of ELSA are our most recognised and important projects that have a strong and continuous presence and long history.

From the AA area, the only Flagship Project currently is the **ELSA Law Review**.

You can find each Flagship project broken down below.

It should be noted that by the time this Handbook is published, AHRC and ROLE have already been pre-approved by the Council to become Flagship Projects, following the procedure outlined in the Decision Book. However, they have not officially gained the status yet, as a second vote is required at the following ICM. This definition and categorisation will then be updated accordingly.

6.3. International Projects

Academic Activities projects at the international level consistently prioritise legal education and social responsibility. Engaging with these projects allows Academic Activities officers to actively contribute to the core purpose of the area.

The international AA projects are **Rule of Law Education, Annual Human Rights Campaign, Legal Research Groups**, the **ELSA x LexisNexis Essay Competition on the Rule of Law** and the **International Focus Programme**.

You can find each international project of ELSA broken down below.

It should be noted that by the time this Handbook is published, AHRC and ROLE have already been pre-approved by the Council to become Flagship Projects, following the procedure outlined in the Decision Book. However, they have not officially gained the status yet, as a second vote is required at the following ICM. This definition and categorisation will then be updated accordingly.

6.4. National/Local Projects

Although the Flagship and International projects of ELSA already provide an unprecedented degree of flexibility in organisation (as compared to other areas), you might still want to engage in creative organisation outside of the scopes of these projects. This enables you to organise specific and targeted initiatives that are usually only relevant for your national/local context.

That being said, keep in mind that AA Flagship/International Projects of ELSA are highly flexible when it comes to the types of concrete events/initiatives/content you are implementing within them. For that reason, whenever planning the organisation of a project, you should ALWAYS first consider whether your idea can be realised within an International/Flagship Project - like the Annual Human Rights Campaign and Rule of Law Education. This way you will give your efforts greater visibility, credibility, stability and support.

Every project you organise should aim to promote social responsibility and/or enhance the legal education of law students and young lawyers. This means focusing on initiatives that serve the public good, strengthen advocacy, and develop key legal skills.

As a National or Local Officer, you have the opportunity to organise a wide variety of projects. You are encouraged to be creative and develop any project that aligns with the objectives of advancing legal education and contributing to society. You can learn more about the most typical National/Local projects in Chapter 13. However, this list is not exhaustive - you can organise anything as long as it fits AA's scope and identity.

7. ELSA Law Review

The ELSA Law Review is the official legal journal of ELSA and one of its Flagship Projects. Law Reviews have a strong history in ELSA with the ELSA Law Review being our second oldest project, dating back more than 40 years. It publishes original, peer-reviewed articles that align with ELSA's mission and values.

The ELSA Law Review is regulated in the *Decision Book, Part 6, Chapter 3*.

You can find more on the ELSA Law Review on lawreview.elsa.org.

7.1. History

The legal journal of ELSA was initially envisioned as the European Yearbook of Law, founded soon after ELSA itself, in 1985. Shortly afterwards, it was systematised and set up into a form similar to the one it holds today and titled ELSA Law Review in 1989 by the first VP AA of the International Board, Siniša Rodin.

In this form, the ELR functioned for around 7 years, after which it was discontinued to give way yet again to the EU-law focused SPEL (Selected Papers on European Law) in 1997, as SPEL's focus was better suited to go with the strong dialogue of EU integration present in Europe at the time. SPEL was coming out for around 10 years until 2010, when ELSA's legal journal fully stopped.

After a brief pause of 4 years, the ELSA Law Review was re-established in the form it has today, given its signature brand we still recognise and set to focus on Human Rights Law to primarily suit our collaboration with the Council of Europe. With the introduction of Flagship Projects of ELSA in 2020 it was immediately recognised for this status. Right after that, although accepting submissions for new Volumes, a long break with no publication lasted until 2025, when the ELR Legacy Collection was published, containing 5 Volumes of content collected and reviewed within these 5 years. In 2025 it has also shed its Human Rights Law focus, allowing further Volumes to expand to a broader range of topics. Now, it accepts submissions and publishes them on a regular, annual basis.

7.2. Calendar

The publication cycle of the ELSA Law Review includes one volume per ELSA term. Submissions open by September 1st and close by December 1st, while the publication is to be expected by the end of each term.

7.3. Editorial Process

The editorial process contains multiple steps and several read-throughs by various collaborators, in order to ensure academic quality, format and consistency. After submission, articles go through a preliminary reading by the Academic Editors before getting submitted to the Academic Board for peer review. Following peer review, based on the recommendations of the Academic Board articles are either rejected or approved for publication, with the possibility of substantive revisions. These revisions are communicated to the authors and they are given appropriate time to address and implement them.

Following the academic review stage, the Editorial Board moves to linguistic editing, technical editing and proofreading of all individual approved articles.

Finally, all approved articles are compiled, and a new Volume of the ELR is born.

7.4. Get Involved

To get involved with the ELSA Law Review, you can submit an academic article on the selected topic, following the Author's guidelines. Additionally you can apply to join the Editorial Board or the Academic Board through calls for the ELSA International Team announced by ELSA International.

Beyond direct contribution, you can support the project by promoting it within your Local/National network and by engaging and sharing ELSA International's posts about the publication to boost participation. Remember: you are ELSA's ambassador for legal education on the ground, and despite you may not directly organise the ELSA Law Review, you can still represent the project as part of ELSA's core portfolio and legacy. This is especially beneficial if your Group doesn't organise any publications on its own.

8. ELSA Legal Research Groups

Legal Research Groups (LRGs) are collaborative research projects where law students and young lawyers explore a legal topic and publish their findings in a public report. LRGs can be unilateral, bilateral, multilateral, or international, depending on the number of organising groups involved.

Each LRG is structured around a main research question, with clear guidelines: an academic framework, timeline, and style guide. The team includes a Project Coordinator, an Academic Board, and Editors to ensure academic quality.

Legal Research Groups are regulated in the *Decision Book, Part 6, Chapter 3*.

You can find more on LRGs on legalresearch.elsa.org, and in their dedicated [LRG Handbook](#).

8.1. History

LRGs are ELSA's oldest fully constant legal writing project that has survived, mostly unchanged, since its early beginnings in 1996, when the first LRG was organised to prepare the legal and policy background of ELSA's Delegates to the Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of a Permanent International Criminal Court (for the adoption of ICC's Rome Statute).

This significant impact on the global legal landscape has always given the LRGs a significant weight, with the Final Reports always being very substantive and comprehensive academic texts for an open-access publication.

Although their intensity and popularity have varied in the last 30 years, LRGs have persisted in more or less the same shape until today, always remaining a recognised and important presence in ELSA's project portfolio. In 2025, the discontinuation of an ILRG by ELSA International has resulted in an LRG matchmaking system, to emphasise the LRGs of the ELSA Network rather than those being organised by ELSA International, shifting focus to Network cooperation and facilitating bilateral and multilateral comparative legal research.

8.2. International Legal Research Group

The International Legal Research Group is a large-scale LRG ran by ELSA International. It usually includes a general legal analysis of the issue at hand, followed by a comparative part tackling multiple selected jurisdictions, usually more than any multilateral LRG.

The ILRG has long been one of ELSA's main international (and briefly Flagship) projects. Especially during the 2010s, ELSA International ran an ILRG every one or two terms, on various topics largely focusing on Human

Rights. During this time, ILRGs were organised in partnership with the Council of Europe, and if you walk the halls of Palais de l'Europe today, you will still find many posters and even Final Reports of the ILRGs published during this time.

However, with the proliferation of other projects and a shift in interest in the early 2020s, it was recognised that it creates too much load on ELSA International for the impact it produces and the engagement it attracts. For this reason, it was deregulated from the Decision Book, and many obligations for ELSA International regarding the ILRG were removed, including the maintain one in organisation at all times. By 2025, two ILRGs were still ongoing and in the final stage of publication, but there are no plans to continue this project further after they are published - the focus of LRGs is instead in the peer-to-peer collaboration of the ELSA Network, with the support and matchmaking by ELSA International.

8.3. LRGs Of The Network

Legal Research Groups within the ELSA network are flexible and highly valuable projects that significantly contribute to the development of participants' legal skills, such as research, legal writing, teamwork, and practical application of legal knowledge.

Local and National ELSA groups are encouraged to collaborate bilaterally or multilaterally on LRGs, allowing them to strengthen ties with other groups and also conduct comparative legal research across different jurisdictions. This collaboration enhances the international dimension of the project, provides access to a wider pool of expertise, and increases visibility within academic and professional circles.

The great thing about LRGs is that they require minimal to no financial resources, making them accessible for local groups of any size, while offering opportunities for publication, academic recognition, and partnerships with legal experts.

Due to their multilateral nature, they require proper and a very thorough organisation with clear deadlines and responsibilities sharing. The organisation of an LRG involves setting clear goals, choosing a timely and relevant research topic, establishing a coordination team and an Academic Board to ensure quality and credibility, and creating a structured timeline with defined outcomes.

Together, these elements make LRGs a dynamic tool for legal education, fostering cooperation, innovation, and professional development among law students across the network.

A helpful tip for managing LRGs: always set external deadlines for Researchers and the Academic Board, but also establish internal deadlines within your coordination team that are later than the official ones. Since extensions are often needed, building in extra time from the start will save you a lot of stress and help keep the project on track.

8.4. Get Involved

To initiate a **UNILATERAL** Legal Research Group, any ELSA Officer from a National or Local Group may submit the [LRG Specification Form](#). By doing so, the Group will:

- Receive guidance and technical support from ELSA International;
- Be listed on the official LRG website once the project is approved.

This enables the Group to structure its research efforts more efficiently and ensures visibility within the Network. While filling out the form is not mandatory, it can greatly help you in organisation, and provide guidance and visibility

The same process applies to **BILATERAL** or **MULTILATERAL** LRGs, with the additional step of requesting matchmaking assistance from ELSA International. Interested Groups should clearly indicate their intent to collaborate with other National Groups in the [LRG Specification Form](#). ELSA International will facilitate connections and provide coordination support to help align goals and research methodologies across borders.

9. LexisNexis X ELSA Essay Competition

The LexisNexis x ELSA Essay Competition on the **Rule of Law** is an international academic initiative organised by ELSA in collaboration with LexisNexis. Its aim is to promote legal writing among law students through essays focused on the Rule of Law. The winning essay is awarded the LexisNexis Rule of Law Award and published in the ELSA Law Review, offering visibility and academic recognition to the author.

Currently, the competition is *not* regulated in the Decision Book or any other official document.

You can find more about the Competition on lawreview.elsa.org/ruleoflaw.

9.1. History

The project was launched during the 2019/2020 term and has since continued with additional successful editions, establishing it as a recurring academic opportunity within the Network. Each year, it tackles a new subtopic in relation to the rule of law.

9.2. Calendar

The project traditionally launches its call for essays in the spring, typically around May, with an application period of approximately one month. The winner is usually announced around June or July. They are then sent their award by LexisNexis, and their essay is published in the first upcoming ELR Volume.

9.3. Get Involved

ELSA Officers can contribute by promoting the competition within their national and local groups, encouraging participation among members, and potentially participating themselves. Promoting participation in this competition on your Faculty/University as an international project of ELSA is a great way to promote ELSA as a legal writing association, especially if you don't have the capacity to organise your own publications - remember: even if you aren't organising it, it's still ELSA's project and you're an ambassador of ELSA's AA projects on the ground. This project offers both academic growth and international visibility.

10. Rule Of Law Education

ROLE is an educational international project of ELSA designed to provide non-formal education on the Rule of Law and leadership to high school students around Europe. ELSA members, trained as facilitators, deliver school visits based on the official ROLE Curriculum and its national derivatives. These visits aim to help students understand core Rule of Law values. Facilitators shall be trained in non-formal education methods, the ROLE curriculum content, and the fundamentals of the Rule of Law.

ROLE is regulated in the *Decision Book*, Part 6, Chapter 4.

Additional regulations apply to National Groups participating in the sub-grant system provided by ELSA International to financially support the implementation of ROLE. These guidelines are applicable to the National Groups who sign the **Subgrant Agreement**, and are listed in it.

You can find more on the ROLE webpage at elsa.org/ruleoflaw, and the dedicated [ROLE Handbook](#).

10.1. History

Launched in the 2020/2021 term as a response to the growing erosion of the Rule of Law in Europe, Rule of Law Education was established as a distinct brand based on the ELSA4Schools format, with a sharper focus on democracy and human rights. Initially led by ELSA Alumni, the first year focused on strategic planning and curriculum development. In 2021/2022, ROLE was officially introduced to the Network during the 80th online ICM and implemented in 8 pilot countries, marking its transition into practice. By 2022/2023, the Curriculum had been translated into over 8 languages, the first EYF grant was secured for the first ROLE Training Conference to take place. In 2023/2024, the Coaching system was launched, supporting 12 National Groups, and additional grants and curriculum derivatives followed. In 2024/2025, ROLE has seen explosive growth in number of participating National Groups, as well as doubled the total number of high schoolers it has ever impacted. With continuous growth in participating National Groups and the development of national curriculum derivatives, ROLE is to grow even further into one of ELSA's biggest projects, equipping thousands of high school students with critical legal knowledge and advocacy skills across Europe.

10.2. Calendar

While implementing ROLE at the national level is flexible and organiser-driven, an international calendar guides the process. At the start of each term, organisers submit a Specification Form detailing their National ROLE Project, after which they are assigned a ROLE Coach.

In the first two months of the term, the ROLE Coach contacts organisers and maintains ongoing support—connecting them to the international level, addressing questions, and ensuring compliance and consistency for effective implementation.

From November to January, applications open for the ROLE Training Conference, held in Brussels in February. Organisers are strongly encouraged to send at least one representative to gain essential knowledge about ROLE, non-formal education, and to exchange experiences with other organisers—fostering integration across the Network.

Between October and February, organisers review the ROLE Curriculum options and select one, localising it if needed. From December to March, most National Projects recruit Facilitators and conduct training to prepare for implementation.

February to June is typically dedicated to school visits, where trained Facilitators deliver the ROLE sessions, bringing the project's core impact to students.

The final step, at the end of each term, is responding to ELSA International's call for unified evaluation. This allows for a Final Report, updates to internal and public information, and supports future outreach to partners through data-driven results.

The end of the term also brings applications for financial support applications through the ROLE subgrant for the activities taking place in the next term.

Below is a rough estimation of the focus points during the year in ROLE:

	Q1 (Aug-Oct)			Q2 (Nov-Jan)			Q3 (Feb-Apr)			Q4 (May-Jul)		
	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL
Specification & Subgrant Application	■										■	
Coaching			●	●		●		●	●	●		●
ROLE Training Conference				■			■					
Curriculum Localisation							■					
Facilitators & Training					■		■		■	■		
School Visits			●	●	●					●	●	●
Evaluation / Subgrant Reporting									■		■	

10.3. ROLE Training Conference

The ROLE Training Conference is held annually by ELSA International in Brussels, with the aim of building a pool of trained facilitators across the ELSA Network. The primary objectives of the Conference are to educate participants on the Rule of Law, introduce them to the principles of non-formal education, and equip them to apply these methods effectively within the ROLE Curriculum. Throughout the event, participants develop their facilitation skills by exploring pedagogical foundations and delivering mock sessions, all under the guidance of world-class trainers specialised in non-formal education techniques.

10.4. National ROLE Projects

Organisation of ROLE in National Groups is done through National ROLE Projects.

Building on the outcomes of the Training Conference, National ROLE Projects translate the international experience into local action. National Groups take the lead in adapting the ROLE Curriculum to their country's legal and educational context, organising interactive school visits and training sessions for facilitators. These projects often begin with national training events, where future facilitators are introduced to non-formal education methods and the fundamentals of the Rule of Law. Supported by ROLE Coaches and trainers from ELSA International, these national - local initiatives ensure the consistent delivery of high-quality educational experiences for high school students. Through these projects, ELSA empowers the next generation to understand, value, and defend the principles of democracy, justice, and the Rule of Law.

10.5. ROLE Curriculum

The Curriculum serves as a pivotal guide in the educational process of ROLE. The key of the Curriculum is that it is designed to encourage high school students to translate the Rule of Law concepts to their own environment through activities and dialogue. The Curriculum establishes a framework that brings structure, coherence, and consistency to the delivery of content, while also allowing for flexibility and adaptability to accommodate diverse learning needs and contextual variations.

To preserve the integrity and uniqueness of the project, organising groups are required to sign the Terms of Use for the Curriculum. At the same time, to ensure a balance between this common structure and local relevance, [localisation guidelines](#) are available in the Officers' Portal to support National and Local Groups in adapting the content appropriately.

When localising the Curriculum, you **must** always consult your ROLE Coach.

10.6. Coaching System

ELSA International has in place a coaching system as a way to assist National Groups in implementing ROLE. The Coaching System also facilitates easier data collection and gathering information regarding project progress, improvement strategies, and better promotion of the project. Each National Group will have its own assigned coach from the ELSA International Team who will be available for direct access to information, advice, and assistance if the group encounters any issues during the organisation of the ROLE

10.7. Get Involved

ROLE derives its strength from the active involvement of the ELSA Network. The more National and Local Groups that take part, the broader the project's reach and the deeper its impact becomes. This impact is not just measured in numbers, but in the meaningful dissemination of the principles of the Rule of Law to the youth of Europe.

10.7.1. As A National

National Officers should begin by completing the ROLE Specification Form at the start of each term. Once submitted, a Coach from the ELSA International Team will be assigned to support the National Group throughout the project's planning and implementation phases.

The main responsibilities of a National Officer include:

- recruiting and training facilitators,
- creating the Curriculum version that best fits their needs
- organising school visits,
- managing administrative tasks, including grant applications and reporting, if the National Group has received a sub-grant from ELSA International.

10.7.2. As A Local

Local Officers play an essential role in bringing ROLE to life on the ground. They are expected to work closely with the **National Coordinator** to divide responsibilities and ensure smooth implementation of school visits and facilitators' engagement.

11. Annual Human Rights Campaign

Annual Human Rights Campaign is a European-wide campaign dedicated to legal education on a yearly specified topic on Human Rights. It unites the Network in raising awareness on the importance of human rights. Through the Annual Human Rights Campaign, National and Local Groups organise coordinated events on national and international standards of protection and implementation of human rights and the specified topic.

Annual Human Rights Campaign is regulated in the *Decision Book*, Part 6, Chapter 6.

You can find more on the AHRC webpage at elsa.org/humanrights and the dedicated [Human Rights Handbook](#).

11.1. History

The Annual Human Rights Campaign (AHRC) has its roots in ELSA Day, first launched in 2013 following the Association's long-standing commitment to human rights, which dates back to its formal integration into ELSA's work in 1995. Originally a one-day event focused on raising awareness through local initiatives, ELSA Day gradually evolved into a broader, year-round campaign addressing a different human rights topic each year. This transformation reflects both the growing engagement of the ELSA Network and the alignment of the AHRC with the values of ELSA. Since its inception, the AHRC has featured themes ranging from children's rights and digital privacy to international humanitarian law and corruption, solidifying its place as one of ELSA's longest-standing and most adaptable projects.

11.2. Calendar

The Annual Human Rights Campaign officially begins on 1st of August.

The AHRC Specification Form as well as the Outline, which includes the appointment of the National Coordinator, opens at the start of each term, typically during the first weeks of August. For National Groups wishing to compete for Council of Europe visibility materials, the submission deadline usually falls in the final days of September, with the exact date set annually and published in the AHRC Outline. After that, any Group can submit an AHRC event to ELSA International at any time.

The Campaign's central event, ELSA Day, is held on 27 November, bringing together the entire Network in a coordinated effort to promote human rights awareness.

Following the implementation phase, the AHRC Evaluation Form opens a few months before the Spring ICM, with its deadline depending on the ICM's start date. During this same period, the Call for new AHRC topics is also launched, allowing the Network to contribute to the shaping of future campaigns.

During the Spring ICM, the winner of the AHRC Competition is announced and rewarded.

Below is a rough estimation of the focus points during the year in AHRC:



11.3. Outline & Supporting Materials

In order to effectively coordinate the Annual Human Rights Campaign and support organisers in preparing their projects, ELSA International provides comprehensive guidance and resources each year. Specifically, ELSA International is responsible for:

- Creating and sharing the **AHRC Outline** for the respective edition by 1 September at the latest. This Outline includes an explanation of the annual topic, the criteria for the Council of Europe Competition, and a detailed timeline of the Campaign.
- Creating and sharing **Supporting Materials** every four months, beginning on 1 September. These materials feature key international days and important dates related to the chosen AHRC topic, helping organisers align their initiatives with relevant global awareness efforts.

The Outline and the Supporting Materials are always disseminated through the AA mailing list and are permanently available on the [Officers' Portal](#).

11.4. AHRC Competition & Awards

To encourage greater involvement from the Network and to measure the impact of the AHRC, ELSA International organises the AHRC Competition each year. This competition invites National Groups to showcase their initiatives related to the AHRC theme. Participation is assessed through a Specification Form and an Evaluation Form, which collect key information on activities carried out between 1 October and two weeks before the start of the Spring ICM. The Competition evaluates the quality, relevance, and outreach of the submitted initiatives. The winning National Group is officially announced during the second regular ICM of the term, and the National Coordinator is awarded a traineeship at the Council of Europe as a personal recognition for their contribution.

11.5. Get Involved

Similarly with ROLE, the success and impact of the Annual Human Rights Campaign rely on the active involvement of the ELSA Network. With members present in every corner of Europe, ELSA has the unique ability to reaffirm that human rights are not guaranteed but they must be continuously promoted, and demanded. The true strength of the AHRC lies in the dedication of Local and National organisers, whose initiatives bring the Campaign's message to life.

11.5.1. As A National

National Officers do more than organise individual AHRC events, they are responsible for coordinating the campaign across their national network. Each year, a National Coordinator is appointed to lead this effort. Their role is to provide structure to the national edition of the Campaign by supporting local officers and collaborating with the rest of the National Board. The National Coordinator is also responsible for ensuring that the resources and assistance provided by ELSA International, such as the Outline and Supporting Materials, are effectively communicated and used at the local level. Additionally, the National Coordinator is the person who submits the Specification and the Evaluation forms for the AHRC Competition and, if selected, is awarded during the spring ICM.

11.5.2. As A Local

Local officers are the ones who bring the AHRC to life on the ground. They take the international campaign and turn it into real action in their communities. To get effectively involved, they can start by coordinating with their National Coordinator to align their events with the overall campaign structure. Local officers can organise

a variety of activities in any format, related to the annual topic. It is also recommended that they regularly consult the supporting materials and timeline provided by ELSA International to ensure consistency and relevance.

AHRC is prized for its flexibility - it can accommodate all types of events organised by all Local Groups and all Key Areas - as long as they are somehow connected to human rights and the AHRC topic of the year. With this in mind, when planning your year with a bunch of local/national events, always ask yourself: Can this be an AHRC event? The answer is almost always YES - and then you just have to tweak the topic and the branding. This way, your national/local event stops being a localised initiative only, and gains internationally recognised visibility, promotion, branding and impact.

12. International Focus Programme

The International Focus Programme (IFP) unifies the entire ELSA Network to raise awareness of a hot legal topic chosen by the Council in regular intervals, usually of multiple years. The Council decides on the topic and its duration on the Spring ICM at the end of each previous topic. The IFP topic can be implemented across all areas of ELSA.

The International Focus Programme is regulated in the *Decision Book, Part 6, Chapter 7*.

You can find more information on the [Officers' Portal](#), under AA > International Focus Programme.

12.1. History

Since its introduction, the IFP has been dedicated to the following topics:

- “A Just World: A new role for lawyers, legal education and law in development” (1995 – 1997)
- “The Law of Peace in the Year 2000 – current violations and effective enforcement of international law; the reform of international organisations” (1997 – 1999)
- “Information Society – the Legal Challenges: Application of New Technologies, Protection of Individuals and the Legislative Response.” (2000 – 2002)
- “Trade Law – a Way for Sustainable Development” (2003 – 2005)
- “25 Years of Legal Development” (2006 – 2007)
- “Intellectual Property Law” (2007 – 2010)
- “Health Law” (2010 – 2013)
- “Media Law” (2013 – 2016)
- “Environmental Law” (2016 – 2019)
- “Law and Technology” (2019-2022)
- “Law and Sustainability” (2022-2025)
- “Law and Security” (2025-2028)

12.2. Get Involved

You can always organise an event under the IFP topic. Consult the materials on the Officers' Portal for all necessary information on the topic, or reach out to ELSA International in case of any unclarities.

13. National/Local Projects

13.1. Law Reviews

Law reviews are academic publications made up of peer-reviewed articles written by students and ELSA members. They aim to deepen legal understanding, develop writing and research skills as well as encourage critical thinking. They are published digitally or in print. For more, view the [Law Review Handbook](#).

13.2. Essay Competitions

An essay competition is a competition inviting students to write on a specific legal topic. They promote legal research and academic writing skills while offering participants the opportunity to win a prize and be published. These competitions are often accessible, engaging and adaptable. For more, view the [Essay Competitions Handbook](#).

13.3. Other publications

Other Publications include a wide range of content such as newsletters or blog posts. These formats are often more accessible and informal than law reviews, allowing for regular updates, student contributions, and thematic flexibility. They can highlight ongoing projects, legal news, or share insights with both members and external audiences.

13.4. Academic Workshops

Interactive sessions focused on a specific legal topic where participants engage through case studies, simulations, or problem-solving tasks. These workshops aim to deepen legal understanding and practical skills.

Example: A workshop where students draft mock legal opinions based on real-life cases.

13.5. Social Responsibility Initiatives

Projects that aim to address societal issues and promote awareness not necessarily legal in nature and often integrated into existing academic or awareness activities.

Example: Organising a clothing donation drive as part of an event on fashion law and sustainability.

13.6. Advocacy Campaigns

Awareness-raising projects that use a theme (often tied to human rights or the rule of law) to inform, engage, and activate students and the broader public through events, content, and discussion.

Example: A panel on LGBTQ+ rights and an accompanying social media campaign.

13.7. ELSA4Schools

ELSA4Schools is an educational initiative developed by ELSA with the goal of introducing high school students to essential legal knowledge while fostering a sense of social responsibility. It envisions empowering the next generation to become informed and active members of society.

You can find more information in the dedicated [ELSA4schools Handbook](#).

13.7.1. From ELSA4schools To ROLE

Although ELSA4Schools laid the format groundwork for the creation of ROLE, the two projects differ in structure, implementation, and impact. ELSA4Schools does not follow a unified curriculum or operate within a coordinated system, which gives it a little bit more flexibility but ultimately results in inconsistent execution across different National Groups. Without a standardised framework, its impact largely varies depending on the local context. In contrast, ROLE is a structured educational program focused specifically on the Rule of Law, supported by an official Curriculum, a coaching system, the Training Conference and financial support, while still remaining flexible when it comes to custom topics and different styles of execution.

14. Crash Course On Project Management

Taking on the role of an Academic Activities Officer is both a challenge and an opportunity. It involves not only organising events and activities that enhance legal education but also developing your leadership, project management, and interpersonal skills. This chapter aims to guide you through the practical aspects of organising projects as AA Officer. It explores modern project and team management techniques, communication practices, and compliance considerations. Each section builds on the experiences of the Network while encouraging innovation and adaptability.

This is only a guide, not a regulation - but it should help you organise your first projects!

14.1. Managing AA Projects

Project management is at the heart of what we do in Academic Activities. Unlike traditional legal education, which often focuses on theory and individual work, managing a project within ELSA requires collaboration, vision, planning, and adaptability. Understanding the lifecycle of a project helps you navigate each phase with clarity.

14.1.1. Conceptualising Your Project

Every project begins with an idea. This stage, sometimes called ideation or conceptualisation, is when you and your team explore a need or opportunity within your network. For example, you may want to raise awareness on human rights or improve legal writing skills among students. Your task here is to identify a meaningful purpose, consider your audience, and think about what format suits your goals best. Is it a legal research group, an academic workshop, or a case study?

Once your idea has been framed, it moves into the design and planning stage. This is where you define objectives, expected outcomes, resources, stakeholders, and potential risks.

14.1.2. Design And Planning

Creating a written project proposal at this point is essential. This document should answer key questions:

- What is the strategic purpose of the project (ROLE, AHRC, other?)
- What is the aim of the project?
- What activities will take place?

- What is the outcome expected (publication, event, etc?)
- Who is the target audience, and who needs to be involved?
- Who are the main stakeholders?
- What is the planned timeline, including major deadlines?
- What are the main risks and what mitigation strategies can you apply?
- How will the outcome be used or shared once completed?

Each of these sections should be written clearly and concisely, ideally in a way that a future officer or an external reader can understand and replicate. A good project description is not only a communication tool but also a planning and monitoring document. Below you can find a systematic example of a project proposal.

Project Title	[E.g Legal Research Group on AI and law]
Background & Strategy	Brief context and relevance to ELSA or legal education goals, why do you want to organise this project in particular, what will the participants get from it? Which strategic goals does it accomplish? Is it part of a Flagship or international project of ELSA?
Objectives	Clear, specific, and measurable goals (use the S.M.A.R.T technique)
Key Activities	Main actions to be implemented (e.g., speaker invitations, venue booking, budgeting...)
Expected outcome	Tangible results like a publication
Timeline	Key phases, and deadlines
Stakeholders & Partnerships	Internal roles (OC, board) and external partners (speakers, sponsors)
Risks & Mitigation	Identified challenges and contingency plans
Monitoring & Evaluation	How progress will be tracked and results reviewed
Legacy & Use of Results	How outcomes will be documented, reused, or shared

A **MASTERPLAN** is going to be your best friend, and your primary tool to organise everything: from timeline, to tasks and responsibilities, and even all the way to links and other useful information. Preparing all the information for your project in advance in a general document like this and making it easily available to all your team members will streamline the entire process and provide you with a great starting point for everyone to know what they need to do and how to do it at all times.

When setting up your plan for the project, dividing a timeline and responsibilities, you might find yourself struggling to collect all information and piece it together. Thus, we have prepared a [Masterplan Template](#) for you to use and customise.

When creating and filling in a masterplan, make sure to include your team in this step. This will ensure that everyone is acquainted with the process and the whole project.

Having a clear project **TIMELINE** with milestones will help you as well as your team to track progress and manage expectations. After this you can move to the implementation stage. In your timeline, you should aim to be as specific as possible, outlining every small task that must be done and the time by which it should take place. This granularity might seem redundant at first, but it greatly contributes to clarity of work and expectations.

14.1.3. Implementation

Implementation is where your project comes to life. You are coordinating people, communicating with speakers and participants, and solving problems as they arise. The success of this stage depends on good preparation but also flexibility. Sometimes a speaker will cancel at the last minute, or your venue will change, these things happen. What matters is your ability to respond calmly and creatively. Regular team meetings, status updates, and shared tools like Google Drive or Trello will help keep everyone aligned. A good habit is also to always think about a backup: backup speaker, backup venue...

To ensure progress during implementation, establish a monitoring framework. This can include weekly check-ins with your team or coordinator, progress tracking, you can use a Gantt chart or apps like Slack or Notion. It can also include a status report, find what works best for you and your team and use it. Monitoring helps you spot issues early, stay organised, and remain accountable. It also builds a culture of transparency and collaboration within your team.

Following implementation, the project must be properly closed. This includes administrative tasks like finalising finances, returning borrowed equipment, sending thank-you notes, and writing a summary report. Closure is not glamorous but crucial, it ensures accountability and allows future teams to build on your experience.

14.1.4. Evaluation

The final but often overlooked stage is **evaluation**. This is your moment to learn and grow, it is essential to ensure the quality of your events and the good reputation of our amazing organisation. Collect feedback from your participants, team, and partners using anonymous surveys or open discussions. Reflect on what went well, what could have been better, and how you would improve next time. Writing down these reflections and sharing them with your successors or board can have a lasting impact on the quality of projects in your group.

14.2. Crisis Management

Even the best-planned projects face setbacks. A speaker may withdraw, the venue may flood, or a miscommunication might create confusion. These moments test your leadership but also build resilience. Preparation and Backup are the key elements here.

Crisis management starts long before the crisis happens. During the planning phase, identify potential risks and set up a preliminary plan to address them. For example:

Scenario	Action Plan
Team member drops out	Activate a back-up person or redistribute tasks. Inform team.
Low registration for event	Extend promotion, contact partners, offer incentives.
Missed deadline	Re-scope project or communicate new timeline transparently.
External partner cancels	Find a substitute or adjust activity format.

Develop contingency plans, Plan B, Plan C, and share them with your team. General principles of crisis management include:

- Prepare backups: Have a "Plan B" for key people, venues, and timelines.
- Communicate early: Don't wait for things to collapse before raising concerns.
- Ask for help: National and International Officers, or Alumni, can support you.

When a crisis occurs, your first job is to stay calm and communicate. Be transparent with your board and your team. Outline the problem, propose solutions, and invite input. Avoid panic decisions; instead, rely on your preparation and the support network around you. Projects fail more often due to silence than mistakes. Proactive communication and preparation are your best tools.

After the project, make sure to document the crisis and how it was handled, this will help your successor learn from your experience.

14.3. Compliance

As an AA Officer of ELSA, you also carry legal and ethical responsibilities. Three areas require special attention: ELSA's Regulations, Terms & Conditions and Data Protection.

By respecting these regulations and principles, you not only protect your ELSA group but also show your participants and partners that we act with professionalism and care.

Being an Academic Activities Officer means being a creator, a planner, a leader, and a learner. With the right tools and mindset, you will not only deliver successful projects, you will also grow as a person and inspire those around you. This is what ELSA is about!

14.3.1. ELSA's Regulations

ELSA has internal regulations that may impose conditions on certain projects, mostly on Flagship and International projects, but also on some National/Local projects.

You can find the latest regulations in force on the Officers' Portal, under IM > Regulations. There, the International Council Meeting Decision Book is the one mainly focusing on AA project-related conditions. You can find Academic Activities under Part 6 of the Document. Here, many projects have conditions and obligations. Make sure to take note of these obligations, as they are often necessary for compliance and coordination of the international project as a whole.

In addition, the Code of Conduct of ELSA is mandatory when organising Flagship Projects, and the ELSA Brand Book is mandatory for all projects regulated in it. Seek help from your Supporting Area Officers for compliance. To make your life easier, if a project is conditioned with one of these, you can find a note providing that information under the project's materials on the Officers' Portal, like below:

*The Code of Conduct of ELSA applies to all ROLE National Projects. Find it **here**.
ROLE must be promoted using the ROLE brand and the ROLE MKT Kit. Find them **here**.*

Finally, your National or Local Group might have additional internal regulatory requirements. Make sure to consult your relevant sources.

14.3.2. Terms & Conditions

If you are running an event that involves participation fees, or if the logistics are complex, you should draft Terms & Conditions. These set out expectations and protect both the organising team and participants. Include information on payments, cancellations, refunds, rights, responsibilities, and dispute resolution.

Your superior or National officer may be able to provide you with templates relevant for you. If not, you can use this [general T&C template](#).

14.3.3. Data Protection

Most ELSA groups fall under the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). This means that any personal data you collect, names, emails, dietary requirements, must be handled legally and ethically. Always collect the **minimum** amount of data, get **consent**, and store it securely. Anonymise feedback and use password-protected platforms for storage.

Even if you are not under GDPR, it is still advisable to maintain a robust Privacy Policy.

Your superior or National officer may be able to provide you with templates relevant for you. If not, you can use this [general privacy policy template](#).

15. Crash Course On Team Management

Academic Activities is not a one-man job. Most AA projects require cooperation with others, whether it is your board, a specific Organising Committee (OC), or a project-specific team. As an AA Officer, part of your role is to structure your team in a way that reflects the project's needs.

Before starting a project, you must plan, recruit and train your team, and then you must delegate tasks effectively.

15.1. Team Planning

Before opening your recruitment, give a thought to how you want your team to work and look like. Different projects require teams of different forms and sizes. While in ELSA we almost always use the rank structure of: VP > Director > Coordinator > Assistant/Coach, these general ranks fit into almost any type of team. Below are just some of the examples, but you can also refer to your predecessor(s) or other people from the ELSA Network who have organised similar projects for input and experience

There are different models of team organisation. An Organising Committee (OC) is often used for large-scale but one-off events that collect many participants during focused time periods, most often physically (conference, big workshop or simulation, ROLE training events etc.). Each person in the OC may have a specific area of responsibility: academic programme, logistics, finance, marketing, or participant coordination.

In contrast, legal writing projects or research groups, or even longer-term campaigns like AHRC and ROLE may be better suited to long-term project teams with specialised roles, such as editors, Academic Board, and researchers.

Some groups adopt cross-functional teams, this provides more flexibility than project specific teams, because they are not assigned a certain area or project. Instead they flexibly join different areas and project as needed. For example, a Knowledge Management Assistant might help on both a legal writing and an academic competition project. These roles are cross-functional and benefit from strong communication and transparency.

15.2. Recruitment

Building your team starts with defining tasks and needs. Think through the timeline and workload of your project. Which tasks are critical? Can some be done alone, while others require collaboration? Create role descriptions and share expectations clearly. During recruitment, prioritise motivation and commitment.

Technical skills can be learned, but a positive and dependable attitude makes all the difference. If your teammates are passionate about the project and motivated, anything is possible!

Give proper preparation and attention to the recruitment of your team. It may sound as a trivial step at first, but the time you invest in your project/area during this stage will make your life significantly easier, and your project/area significantly stronger in just a few months' time.

When you set up the idea of your team, the next phase is applications and evaluation. In this stage, you are seeking to reach not only a rational, but also a subjective feeling of TRUST: the feeling and conviction that you can TRUST this person to execute the tasks correctly and independently when tasked. As soon as you feel this, you should recruit this person. If you are not sure yet, never hesitate to conduct additional tests, or even reject all applicants and reopen the recruitment call. While it may sound like an unnecessary burden, your team is your backbone for ANYTHING you do in ELSA, and if you sacrifice time and effort now during recruitment, the problems will only multiply later down the line

When recruiting, you might want to do review based on written applications, live interviews or even mock tasks. What is crucial is that your method reflects the actual needs and challenges of the position this person is applying for, and that it enables you to establish TRUST.

15.3. Delegation

The importance of delegating tasks in any ELSA work is crucial. Not only does it make larger projects even possible, not only does it improve the time and wellbeing of you as an Officer and everyone involved, not only does it involve and encourage new generations to step up to contribute to ELSA, but it also enables you to learn and practice the skill of delegating, which is a crucial asset to have in many modern work environments.

Delegation is an essential part of leadership. Resist the temptation to do everything yourself. Instead, assign ownership and responsibility. Trust your team members, support them, and give them space to grow. Regularly check in, not to micromanage, but to listen, support, and adapt. Tools like delegation tables or task boards help maintain visibility without over-controlling, you can use G-Suite, Slack or Asana.

When setting up a team or leading it through a project, we often come across the infamous dilemma:

Which tasks to delegate, which to keep for yourself?

And to that question, the answer is not always identical, but should always be:

Aim to delegate as much as you possibly can - and then some.

But jokes aside, the actual decision on what to delegate should always be based on the following 3 components:

- a) **TRUST:** when creating any team, you should ALWAYS start from a place of trust. You MUST have trust in the ability of your team members to execute the task well and according to your instructions. If you find yourself in a situation where you don't trust a team member with any task, this usually means you haven't paid enough attention when recruiting them. Scrutinising your team members should usually take place at recruitment - and you shouldn't recruit someone that you see you can't trust.
- b) **INSTRUCTION:** in hand with trust, goes your obligation to explain and set out the tasks and expectations clearly. Your time executing low-level tasks should thus be replaced with your time spent explaining and guiding. Ironically, while it will usually take a similar amount of time IN THE BEGINNING, if you set up your team with good knowledge at the start, you will be able to kick back later and watch miracles happen. Give a man a fish, he will eat for a day - but teach a man to fish, and he will organise projects for you for the whole term.
- c) **ACCOUNTABILITY:** in order for your team to feel comfortable working independently based on your instruction, you must assure them that YOU will take the end accountability for everything they do. This is the double-edged sword of leadership: all their achievements are by extension yours, but so are all their mistakes - and this is what profiles good leaders. If you assure your team that if they make a mistake you will be the one to own it, protect them, apologise for it and remedy it - your team will be more incentivised to follow instructions and give their best. This compliments TRUST, as it makes the team trust you back, and thus productively sets up the relationship between you and your team.

In order to delegate effectively and maintain this task division, you should:

- Set clear tasks: Who does what by when?
- Set expectations: What does "done well" look like?
- Use tools: Google Workspace, Slack, a [Masterplan](#)
- Follow up regularly on "How is it going?" but don't micromanage each task

15.4. Team Motivation & Wellbeing

Team motivation fluctuates, especially in a voluntary environment. It is your job to create purpose. While there is no one-size-fits-all recipe for this, a general framework of encouragement, leadership and openness is the way to go. Explain why tasks matter, celebrate progress, and adapt workloads when people feel overwhelmed. Feedback, both positive and constructive, should be regular and specific. And remember, you are also part of a team. Let them support you. Some helpful motivation & feedback tips:

- Share the *why*: explain the purpose behind the project, and each task.

- Celebrate wins: milestones reached, campaigns launched.
- Ask for feedback: use forms, informal check-ins, and end-of term evaluations

15.5. Deadlines

Knowing the workload and deadlines in advance will open up many team members to contribute more strongly, because they are able to allocate sufficient time. Make sure to plan as far ahead and as granular as possible, and to inform your team far in advance (if possible, immediately at the start of their term) of all the tasks, workload and stress periods throughout the year. This way, it will be easier for them to map out their responsibilities and make sure that no task is left undone.

15.6. Your Friends In The Team

You may often find yourself recruiting to your team someone who is genuinely your friend, not just another random ELSA Officer. This can have extremely positive, but also detrimental effects - not only on ELSA, but on your relationship. Thus, it is important to foresee situations that may arise in advance, disclaim adequately and prepare properly. Only this way you ensure that your friendship and ELSA work in hand to support each other, instead of one infringing on the other.

But what to do?

Firstly, like in any other workplace, hierarchy must be maintained. If you are recruiting your friend, you must explain to them in a kind way that them joining your team means you are in charge: setting deadlines, checking up on the work, giving feedback. You should agree with them in advance that a crisis or negative feedback situation can be isolated from your friendship into the work environment, and that all issues arising within the scope of ELSA work should be resolved within the same scope.

On the other hand, it is also advisable to agree with your friend on how you will tackle outside disagreements impacting their tasks and execution. Here, separation of work and outside relationships is also advisable.

In conclusion: working in ELSA with your friends is a proven method to gain friends (and even family!) for life, as ELSA has made many friendships and relationships connect, last and prosper. But if approached carelessly or incorrectly, a friendship coming in conflict with work duties can not only infringe on the projects you're organising, but also stop you from creating and maintaining meaningful connections for years to come.

16. Transition & Knowledge Management

Transition, or *handover*, as it is referred to by many other organisation, is the structured and intentional transfer of all knowledge gained through an ELSA term from one officer to their successor. It is the backbone of any ELSA Officer and all their work. By extension, it is also the biggest strength, and biggest weakness of our Association: while a good transition can set you up for historic success, a lacking one can easily slow you down and debilitate your work throughout the year.

Why is this so?

Our term is very short, even compared to many other youth NGOs. Most Officers only have a year in their position. During this time, they conduct a lot of communication, and collect a lot of institutional knowledge - on projects, partners, relations - you name it. When the time comes to leave, all this knowledge must be given to the next person in charge. Failing to do this makes us spin in circles like mindless animals, unable to build up on our own knowledge, repeating the same mistakes for decades on end, embarrassing ourselves in front of externals and more.

Thus, if you take anything away from this handbook, let it be the following:

You must properly prepare and conduct transition.

You can find out a little bit more about Transition below, and even more in the Transition Manual, which can also serve to help you structure and deliver it.

16.1. Knowledge Management In General

Transition is only one, but the most important part of the wider area of activity in any organisation is Knowledge Management. Knowledge is one of the most powerful assets in ELSA. The management of the knowledge you acquire and generate throughout your term is essential to ensure the continuity of ELSA. This crucial part of an Officer's role overall is often overlooked, and this always leads to stagnation, or even regression of projects, expertise and progress in general.

Thus, every Officer must be aware of the knowledge they are generating and creating, and conduct themselves with this knowledge responsibly and systematically.

Verba volant, scripta manent. - it is your responsibility as an ELSA Officer to systematically document everything you do and learn during your term in permanent and written form, so that not only you, but many generations after you may use this knowledge to build upon.

You must remain aware, conscious and engaged in active preservation of knowledge during its whole cycle:

- Knowledge **Creation**: Happens during project planning, execution and collaboration. Includes any materials produced, written or unwritten.
- Knowledge **Capture**: Happens during or after the previous phase. It consists of writing down and systematising the knowledge created with simple tools.
- Knowledge **Sharing**: Making knowledge accessible to key stakeholders. This means your Board, your team, your successors and if applicable, externals.
- Knowledge **Application**: Usage of knowledge stored from previous steps to improve and grow

Tips and tools for successful knowledge management:

- Use your ELSA Google Workspace (not personal accounts) and use clear folder organisation & naming conventions, so someone other than you can use it easily.
- Create and use templates for documentation - project reports, meeting minutes, transition notes.
- Embrace the practice of pre- and post-event surveys and debriefs - talk about what is going to happen and just happened primarily with your Board and team, but also with externals.

16.2. Emergency - No Transition?

If you have received no transition and start your term as a tabula rasa, you are by definition in a **much** worse starting position than many other AAers, and maybe even your boardies/other team members. If not remedied properly and in time, this will have a debilitating effect on your knowledge and work throughout the year, stopping you from utilising your skills and potential, and robbing ELSA and your Group from the contribution you might have otherwise been able and willing to give.

So, what to do if you have received no transition, or you see that it was significantly lacking?

Easy. Email academicactivities@elsa.org and request a transition. The VP AA of the International Board of ELSA will then either give you a transition themselves, or arrange that you receive sufficient submission.

16.3. Receiving Transition

After getting elected/appointed, you are supposed to receive transition. This includes an obligation on both sides: for your predecessor to give it, and for you to receive it. Thus, when receiving transition it is important that you enter it with an open mind and remain receptive to all the knowledge and skills your predecessor has to give you. Remember - it's part of the job. Even if you do not intend to remain in touch with your predecessor, transition still must be conducted, and then you may part ways if you really so wish.

16.4. Preparing Transition - Throughout The Term

Preparing transition is not just about collecting everything you want to say in the last two weeks of the term. It is a year-long process, inseparable from the wider Knowledge Management in general.

When stepping into the term, it is important to keep in mind the importance of transition throughout the whole year, right from the get-go. If you collect and systemise knowledge during the entire year while keeping in mind that you will have to fully give it over and clearly explain it to your successor - it will make your next transition a breeze to deliver. Try to always keep in the back of your mind this crucial truth: you are not the first and not the last one, and the biggest contribution you can give ELSA is your commitment to continuous improvement, largely embodied through preparing and delivering a comprehensive transition.

16.5. AA Transition Handbook

Since transition is such a crucial part of what we do, ELSA International also prepares a dedicated [AA Transition Handbook](#) which you can find on the Officers' Portal. We strongly encourage you to use this document to help you prepare and conduct your outgoing transition.

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