



DENTONS

‘Opinionated?’

2025 Legal Opinion Competition

Details

Here's your chance to prove your legal analysis skills and be in to win a great prize

Dentons is delighted to sponsor the 2025 Dentons Legal Opinion Competition. The Competition is exclusive to Otago University students studying 2nd year law papers in 2025. It requires a demonstration of legal analysis, communication, and teamwork skills – the key attributes of a top lawyer.

Why sponsor a legal opinion competition like this? Much of our success at Dentons can be put down to the effective collaboration of our teams in producing compelling legal arguments – whether through internal teams combining their skills to provide an effective legal solution for the commercial challenges our clients face, or through working with our clients as part of their teams to help them devise and implement winning commercial strategies. We are interested in seeing if students coming through Otago Law School have got what it takes to succeed on that basis.

So if you think you can collaborate with your classmates to present a compelling legal opinion, and want to be in to win a great prize, read on!

What's involved?

Please go to www.dentons.co.nz/careers/opinionated where you will find a fact scenario for you to consider. This focuses on some of the key principles you have learnt so far in property and contract law, with a couple of extra issues thrown in.

Have a read of that fact scenario. Then you need to:

- get into a team of 3–4 students from LAWS202 and LAWS203
- take on the role of a group of law clerks at a law firm and register your interest with us no later than Monday 8 September 2025
- prepare a concise, solution-focused analysis of the legal situation for your hypothetical supervising partner, and get that to us no later than 12.00pm, Thursday 11 September 2025, and
- include a clear outline of how you approached the task as a team when you submit your analysis.

We will then select a shortlist of the teams who we feel have presented the best quality legal analysis. They will need to present their solution to a panel of experts (your supervisors at the hypothetical firm) scheduled for Friday 19 September 2025.

From those presentations, we select the two teams who demonstrate the most effective team approach in presenting a sound legal analysis of the problem. Those two teams go head to head in the grand final that afternoon, where teams present to the hypothetical client in front of an audience of faculty and peers.

Assessment Criteria in more detail

We are looking for teams who enter the competition to demonstrate top legal analysis and opinion writing skills, combined with an effective teamwork approach. You will be able to do this in a number of stages:

- **First:** by submitting a written memorandum of no more than two pages in length, outlining the legal issues involved in the fact scenario. The page limit is not a hard and fast restriction, but is imposed to give you an idea of the degree of depth and detail we are looking for. Aim for a response that provides a concise solution-focused analysis of the situation, drawing on your contract and property law knowledge and communication skills. Your hypothetical firm supervisors will be hoping that you succinctly cover off the key issues for them, without fishing up too many red herrings.

The written memorandum needs to be accompanied by an outline of the team strategy adopted to tackle the exercise, so we can get a feel for how you approached this task as a team. (Note this accompanying memorandum does not count towards the two page submission limit).

- **Second:** from the written submissions we will select a shortlist of teams to provide a brief presentation to a panel of experts, comprising your hypothetical supervisors. The panelists will consider which teams have been most effective in presenting a legally appropriate approach to the problem at hand.

The quality of your written response will determine whether you make it to the second stage. Getting to the final stage requires you to demonstrate an X factor in presenting your arguments—as well as convincing us of the quality of your analysis.

- **Third:** two teams will be selected from the shortlist presentations for the last stage of the competition—the grand finale where the selected finalists will present their solution to the hypothetical client. Here we will be looking for the team that presents the most effective opinion to the grateful client. Your advice must not only be technically correct. It must direct the client towards a legally appropriate course of action.

Each team will be assessed on:

- the quality of their legal analysis – in particular, the effectiveness of their response to the challenges presented, including the clarity with which issues and possible options have been articulated
- the level of innovation and pragmatism in their response
- the quality of their team strategy, both as communicated in conjunction with their written legal analysis and as portrayed in their verbal presentations, and
- the extent to which they have maximised value from the skills of each team member.

Demonstration of effective teamwork will be a key consideration for us, without losing sight of the overriding requirement to provide a legally appropriate response to the fact scenario presented.

Competition Rules

We have tried to limit the hard and fast rules as much as possible to give you sufficient freedom to demonstrate your skills—and hopefully have some fun in putting together a response that will grab our attention and make us want to hear more from you. Key criteria for team composition are:

- teams must comprise of three to four undergraduate students enrolled in the LLB degree at Otago University
- all entrants must be taking LAWS 202 Law of Contract and LAWS 203 Property Law in 2025
- each team member may be involved in only one team.

The Prizes

The reward for the effort put in by the winning team is a cash prize of \$2,000 for the team—plus we'll pay for you to come up to Wellington at a later date to experience a day in the working life of Dentons' award winning teams.

If you would like to register your interest please email Claire Wilkinson at legalopinioncompetition.nz@dentons.com. We can then keep you informed of any competition developments, and remind you of key deadlines.

If you have any queries about how this all works, please call Claire Wilkinson on 04 915 0810 or email us at legalopinioncompetition.nz@dentons.com.

Best of luck with your submission!



David Ireland

Otago University Liaison Partner
D +64 4 498 0840
M +64 21 343 615
E david.ireland@dentons.com



Claire Wilkinson

Competition Co-ordinator
D +64 915 0810
M +64 27 700 9298
E claire.wilkinson@dentons.com

PS: The circumstances, people and organisations portrayed in the fact scenario are entirely fictitious, and do not necessarily reflect an actual past or present situation, or relate to any client of Dentons. Any resemblance between the virtual reality we have created and anyone's perception of reality is entirely coincidental and unintended.