

Guidance for Working on ACRP Legal Studies Projects

The process for all projects is fairly standard, and this guidance will help Principal Investigators (PI) understand it and be aware of all expectations, including submitting the final deliverable for publication.

11-01 Process

Once the PI has been selected and a contract has been executed, the PI will complete Task 1 by providing a brief outline of the report. This might entail some preliminary research to inform the outline. A research plan, describing how the information will be obtained, should also be submitted with the outline. Also, if the project was broken up into phases, and only Phase I was authorized, a proposal for Phase II should be included with the submittal.

Three weeks after submission of the Task 1 deliverable, there will be a conference call between the PI and the panel. Therefore, as soon as the contract is executed, please coordinate with the ACRP Program Officer on potential dates and times for the conference call so that the panel can be polled to find the best time for that call.

After the call, the PI will conduct further research as approved by the panel (Task 2) and begin working on the Task 3 deliverable. This is the initial draft that the panel will read. Another conference call is scheduled approximately three weeks from submission of that draft. Again, it's important that the PI coordinate with the ACRP Program Officer in advance of submitting the Task 3 deliverable so that a date can be found prior to the submittal.

The feedback and comments received will help the PI with editing the first of two deliverables for Task 4. The first is the Draft Final Deliverable (DFD) and it will be submitted along with a red-lined version from the Task 3 report. The panel will review the DFD within three weeks and formally respond with written comments.

Those comments need to be addressed point-by-point. There is a specific format that must be followed when responding to the comments. Only changes made in response to panel comments may be made to the DFD. It's important to note in the response to the comments that an edit that was made and the page in the final deliverable where the change can be found. (If a change is not made, a rationale must be provided.) This is helpful for internal review of the document prior to publication.

This final version (the second deliverable of Task 4) is submitted as a Word document before the expiration of the contract and is referred to as the Final Deliverable (FD). There is no need to submit a red-lined version with this submittal.

Once the FD has been submitted, the report is quality checked. This involves reading it for consistency and to see if anything is in need of a citation. Citations are also checked for accuracy and format (see Blue Book style). The responses to panel comments are also reviewed to ensure that they have been adequately addressed and that the responses correspond to the FD submitted.

The FD then goes into the editing and publication phase where approval from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine is sought. ACRP needs to ensure that no sensitive or pejorative comments are made and that the deliverable does not contain policy statements or recommendations to any federal agency.

Style, Format, & Editing

Our legal research digests (LRD) are lightly edited for grammar, style, and usage consistency using the *Blue Book: A Uniform System of Citation* (18th Ed.) for case law and citation reporting style. However, it is the author's responsibility to make sure all citations are in proper BlueBook form. Citations should be done in small caps, (rather than all caps), and if that is not possible, then please use roman. Remember to use supra references for reoccurring citations.

The level of editing effort covers grammar, spelling, punctuation, and other mechanics of style as well as the internal consistency of facts and presentation. Tasks also include querying and correcting inconsistencies; flagging and checking heading levels and callouts for figures and tables; cross-checking in-text references and footnote numbering; proofing graphics and appendixes; and flagging sexist language or jargon. "Content-specialist" editing is not done by TRB so it is incumbent upon the PI to obtain such professional editing services if it is deemed to be necessary prior to submitting the final deliverables.

Page proofs may be provided to the PI along with any queries the editors may have. To help keep the production of the LRD on schedule, it is expected that the turn-around time be a week. This is the PI's opportunity to check for any glaring mistakes and answer the queries. It is not the opportunity to update the document, case law, rewrite new sections or add/change footnotes. Our documents are not considered to be "living documents" but represent a point in time.

Any questions about this process can be addressed to the ACRP Program Officer.

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