



FUTURE THOUGHT LEADERS

page by page towards tomorrow

Essay Competition



OUR STORY

We at ThoughtLeaders4 are serious about providing opportunities to up-and-coming practitioners specialising in Asset Recovery, Fraud, Insolvency and Enforcement. We strongly believe that the next generation of practitioners should be writing, speaking at and attending events in order to build their network and further their careers. With this in mind, we are proud to present the **5th Edition** of our **Future Thought Leaders Essay Competition**.

Assessed by an illustriously experienced, senior and broad-ranging panel of practitioners this is your chance to stick your head above the parapet and mark yourself as the one to-watch. With the opportunity to attend and present your essay at our **Global FIRE Starters Summit: Dublin** as well as attend our **FIRE International: Vilamoura** event in Portugal, we look forward to your submissions and to welcoming you to the FIRE Starters community.

THE BRIEF

Essay Title: How should courts and practitioners adapt enforcement strategies to address the challenges of tracing and recovering digital assets?

The rise of digital assets has transformed financial markets and commercial transactions, introducing complex challenges for enforcement. From tracing cryptocurrencies across borders to recovering assets hidden in decentralised systems, courts and practitioners are confronted with questions that existing legal frameworks were never designed to answer.

This essay competition invites participants to explore how enforcement strategies must evolve to meet the realities of digital assets. Essays may consider the role of courts, regulators, and practitioners in adapting established tools, as well as the potential for new remedies, cross-border cooperation, and technological innovation.

Participants are encouraged to examine the legal, practical, and jurisdictional hurdles that arise in tracing and recovering digital assets, while envisioning a future enforcement landscape that can both safeguard victims and support innovation in this fast-moving area.

PRIZES

AMAZING OPORTUNITIES FOR THE RISING STARS



WINNER

- Winner of the competition will have the opportunity to present their essay at FIRE Starters: Global Summit taking place in Dublin, 25 - 27 February 2026.
- Winner of the competition will win a free ticket to FIRE International: Vilamoura taking place in Portugal 19 - 21 May 2026.



TOP 3

- Top 3 entrants as chosen by the judging panel will win free tickets to attend FIRE Starters Global Summit 2026: Dublin.
- The first runner-up will also win a free ticket to FIRE International: Vilamoura taking place in Portugal 19 - 21 May 2026.



ALL ENTRANTS

- All entrants will have their essays published in the FIRE Magazine. This will be published digitally prior to FIRE Starters Global Summit 2026, along with a print run at the event.

ENTRANTS ELIGIBILITY



Must be a FIRE Starter (2-15 years qualified)

JUDGING PANEL



WILLIAM CHRISTOPHER
PARTNER
KINGSLEY NAPLEY

William has specialised in commercial litigation with a particular focus on civil fraud actions since he qualified. He has extensive and wide-ranging litigation experience, having acted in cases involving contractual disputes, breach of fiduciary duty, breach of trust, and insolvency-related litigation. He is listed in the global directory “Who’s Who of Asset Recovery”, and is ranked in Chambers and Partners and The Legal 500.



REBECCA MCNULTY
PARTNER
OGIER

Rebecca is Partner in Ogier's Jersey Dispute Resolution team. Rebecca has significant experience across a broad range of commercial litigation matters, trust disputes, cross border insolvency and restructuring, property disputes, investigations (regulatory and internal) and insurance related disputes. She regularly advises local and international clients in complex actions often involving multiple parties in multiple jurisdictions from pre-litigation through to trial.



JAMES POPPERWELL
PARTNER
MACFARLANES

James is head of the firm's fraud practice. He specialises in asset tracing and enforcement and the management of complex, international disputes in state courts and arbitration. As well as running disputes at all levels of the English courts, James has significant experience in managing parallel proceedings in different jurisdictions.



AMMAR ELBANNA
FOUNDER & MANAGING PARTNER
INCEPT LEGAL

Ammar is the Founder and the Managing Partner of Incept Legal with offices in Dubai and Cairo. He brings 17 years of outstanding legal experience in the Middle East. He also worked at international firms, notably Stephenson Harwood (“SH”), and have advised and acted for multinational corporate clients and high-net-worth clients across contentious and non-contentious matters including clients in management consultancy, oil and gas, insurance, health and pharmaceutical, real estate development, government bodies, industrial, hospitality, media, entertainments, banks, payment solutions and finance.



BLAIR LEAHY KC
BARRISTER
TWENTY ESSEX

Blair has a broad commercial practice with an emphasis on complex multi-jurisdictional fraud claims and disputes with technical insolvency or company law aspects. She is ranked across all her main practice areas in the latest editions of Chambers UK Bar and The Legal 500, and prior to taking silk, won Insolvency Junior of the Year at The Legal 500 UK Bar Awards 2019. She is described in the directories as “all-round excellent” and receives particular praise for her court room skills (“her advocacy is on another level”) and “amazingly good judgment”.



JOSEPH ROME
COUNSEL
SEQUOR LAW

Joseph Rome, counsel at Sequor Law, focuses his practice on international arbitration and litigation, judgment and arbitral award collection, asset recovery, corruption and proceeds of crime recovery, and financial fraud. Prior to joining Sequor Law, Joseph was an “A” level prosecutor for the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office focusing primarily on attempted murders, gun crimes, and serious sexual assaults from the investigation stage through trial. He was also a member of the Police Accountability and Integrity Task Force, Hate Crimes Unit, and Traffic Homicide Unit.

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FORMAT GUIDELINES

LENGTH: 1800 words (+/- 10% allowance);

FONT FORMAT: Times New Roman/Arial, 12-point;

SPACING: 1.5 line spacing;

ALIGNMENT: Lined up evenly at the left margin;

DOCUMENT FORMAT: Must be a Word Document.

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TIMELINE



28 November 2025

Submission deadline



14 January 2026

Top 3 essays & winner are announced



26 February 2026

Winner presents the essay at FIRE Starters
Dublin 2026

MARKING CRITERIA

Argument:

- 1) Originality of thought and a clear position in relation to the question;
- 2) Provision of compelling and thorough examples to support each main point in the argument;
- 3) Persuasive argument which could be tailored / cut down and presented at the summit.

Flow:

- 4) Coherence and cohesion throughout the essay;
- 5) Develops ideas cogently, organises them logically, and connects them with clear transitions.

Style:

- 6) Demonstrates a superior grasp on the conventions of academic / standard written English, (i.e. grammar usage and mechanics) though may have some minor errors;
- 7) Uses elegant vocabulary yet is clear, concise and accessible to the interdisciplinary audience;
- 8) Syntax is sophisticated and varied.

HOW TO SUBMIT

IN 3 EASY STEPS

1

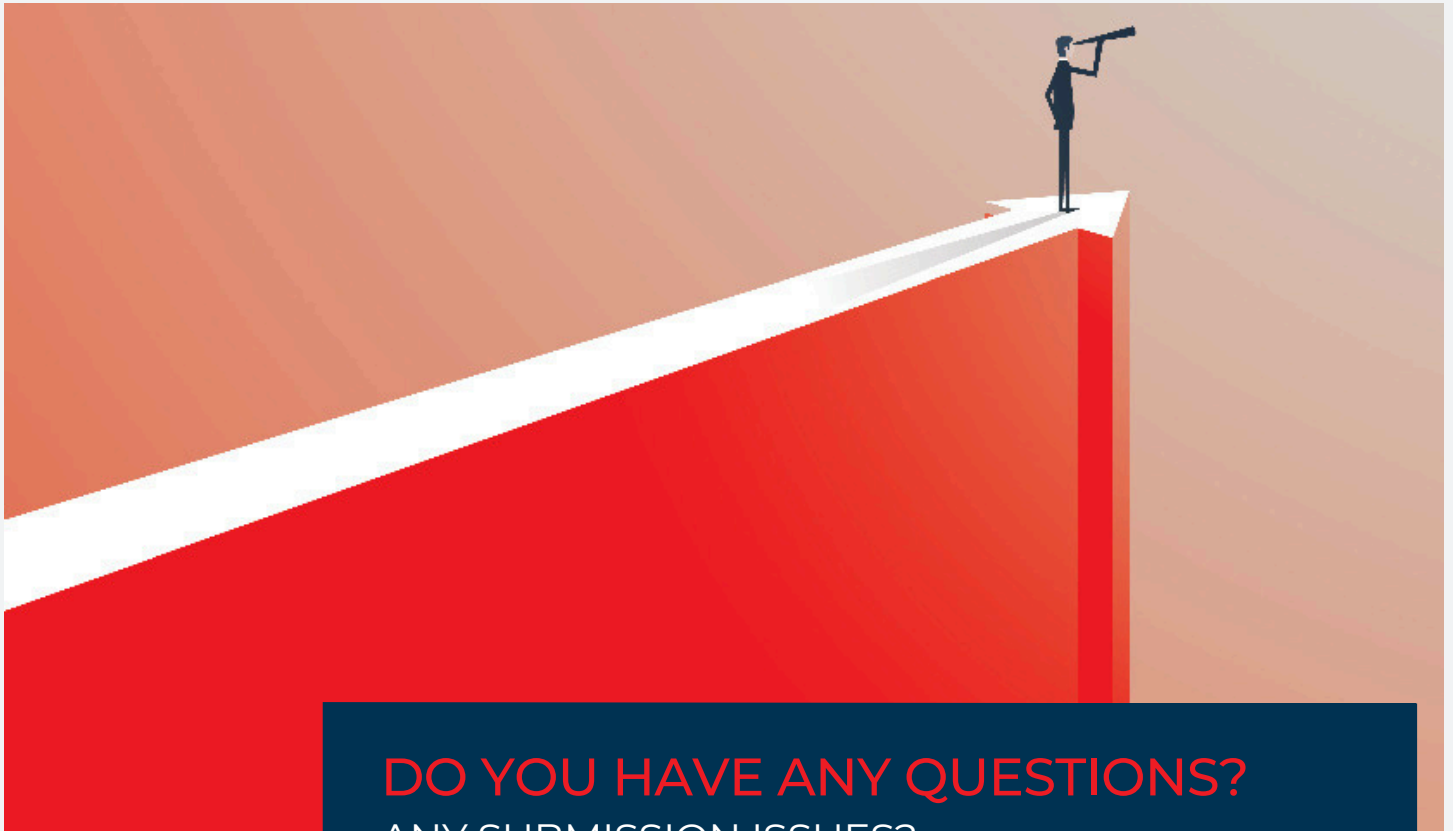
Go to our [website](#);

2

Fill in the form with your details;

3

Attach your essay as a Word Document and submit it.



DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

ANY SUBMISSION ISSUES?

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT TL4?

Contact amelia@thoughtleaders4.com

A MESSAGE FROM ONE OF OUR WINNERS...



Joseph Rome
Counsel
Sequor Law

— “ —

The competition was a great experience. Not only did I get the opportunity to discuss issues that I am passionate about, but I was able to connect with numerous other anti-fraud practitioners in both Dublin and Portugal and learn about their incredible experiences and expertise.

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