

From Special Case to Universal Axiom

The movement from a special case to a universal axiom is the process by which Malone Doctrine extracts enduring authority from a specific experience without converting one person's grievance, one institution's failure, or one historical event into an overbroad rule.

A special case provides the point of discovery. It does not automatically establish the final doctrine.

The working sequence is:

**Case → Mechanism → Harm → Required Condition → General Principle → Universal Test
→ Axiom**

The objective is to identify the durable truth beneath the event.

The Special Case

Doctrinal development often begins with a concrete experience.

A person may be denied access to education, misled by an adviser, excluded through administrative procedure, falsely represented by a public figure, or harmed by an institution that refuses accountability. The event may reveal a serious defect requiring correction.

The first duty is to preserve the case accurately:

- What occurred?
- Who possessed authority?
- What actions were taken?
- What records exist?
- What harm followed?
- Which facts are documented, circumstantial, anecdotal, or inferred?
- What remains uncertain?

The case must not be exaggerated to make it doctrinally important. Its value lies in what it reveals.

Anecdotal evidence may identify a mechanism before broader documentation exists. A documented case may establish the mechanism with greater certainty. In either form, the experience becomes a starting point for analysis.

Isolate the Mechanism

The drafter must separate the operative mechanism from the personalities and incidental details of the case.

The relevant problem may not be that one official behaved unfairly. It may be that an institution exercised unreviewable discretion. The problem may not be that one adviser lied. It may be that consequential advice was accepted without independent verification. The problem may not be that one spokesperson made a false statement. It may be that no accountable system of representation existed.

The drafter asks:

- What made the harm possible?
- What authority, dependency, information gap, or procedural weakness was involved?
- Could the same mechanism operate through another person or institution?
- Is the problem unique, or is it a recurring form of conduct?
- What would have prevented or reduced the harm?

Doctrine should govern the mechanism rather than merely condemn the actor.

Define the Harm

The harm must then be stated independently of the original case.

A student may lose enrollment, but the broader harm may be exclusion from a critical developmental pathway. A worker may lose a promotion, but the broader harm may be unequal administration of professional standards. A community may be misrepresented in one interview, but the broader harm may be unauthorized control over collective identity and political interests.

This step converts the event from a personal narrative into a doctrinal problem.

The harm should be defined carefully enough to justify a response without claiming more than the evidence supports.

State the Required Condition

The required condition identifies what must become true to prevent repetition.

Examples may include:

- material claims must be independently verified;
- administrative decisions must be transparent and reviewable;
- representation must arise from an identifiable constituency;
- public power must remain accountable;
- institutional authority must not be used as a concealed instrument of exclusion;
- important community knowledge must be documented and preserved.

The required condition should correct the mechanism rather than merely reverse the outcome for one person.

A remedy limited to the original victim may provide relief without producing doctrine. Doctrine asks what standard should govern future cases.

Derive the General Principle

The principle states the enduring ethical standard revealed by the required condition.

For example, a case involving deceptive advice may produce the principle:

Trust shall be proportionate to verified conduct and the consequences of error.

A case involving administrative exclusion may produce:

Institutions exercising material authority over others must administer their standards consistently, transparently, and subject to meaningful review.

The principle is broader than the case but remains connected to a recognizable domain of conduct.

At this stage, the language should not yet be called an axiom merely because it sounds important.

Apply the Universal Test

An axiom must survive conditions beyond the original dispute.

The proposed language should be tested by asking:

- Would it remain valid if the identities of the parties were reversed?
- Would it apply to Malone institutions as well as outside institutions?
- Would it bind a leader the drafter supports?
- Would it remain sound in another generation or political environment?
- Does it depend upon one historical circumstance?
- Is it foundational, or does it merely state a policy preference?
- Can reasonable exceptions exist without destroying it?
- Does it conflict with an existing axiom?
- Does it govern several principles, or only one narrow rule?

This is the point at which personal preference is separated from universal authority.

A statement that protects only favored persons is not a universal axiom.

A statement that applies only when convenient is not a universal axiom.

A statement that depends upon the founder's continued presence is not a universal axiom.

A statement that merely prescribes procedure is not a universal axiom.

An axiom must remain defensible when its authority is applied impartially.

Remove Accidental Details

The language must then be stripped of facts that belong only to the originating case.

Names, locations, dates, political factions, agencies, and specific remedies may belong in the article, case record, commentary, or Primer. They usually do not belong in the axiom.

The axiom should preserve the moral structure while removing accidental detail.

For example, a case-specific statement might say:

A particular school shall not deny transportation assistance after requiring a student to attend a distant program.

That may support a complaint or rule, but it is not an axiom.

The deeper proposition may concern responsibility:

No authority may impose an obligation while arbitrarily withholding the reasonable means necessary for compliance.

That proposition can govern education, employment, government, contracts, institutions, and internal Malone administration.

The special case remains important because it revealed the principle. The axiom becomes valuable because it governs beyond the case.

Distinguish Axiom From Principle and Rule

Not every generalized lesson belongs at the highest level.

A provision is likely a **rule** when it specifies required conduct under identifiable conditions.

A provision is likely a **principle** when it states an enduring ethical standard within a domain.

A provision is likely an **axiom** when it establishes a foundational truth, source of authority, universal duty, or governing limit from which multiple principles can be derived.

Classification protects the hierarchy from inflation.

If every important lesson becomes an axiom, axioms lose their foundational function. Narrow provisions should remain rules. Domain-specific standards should remain principles. Only propositions capable of supporting broad doctrinal development should be elevated.

Return Downward for Verification

Once a proposed axiom is drafted, it must be tested downward.

The drafter should determine:

- What principles follow from it?
- What rules would it justify?
- What conduct would it prohibit?
- What procedures would institutions need?
- Could those lower provisions be implemented fairly?
- Does the axiom create unintended authority?
- Could it be weaponized by an official or hostile actor?

If the downward consequences are incoherent, unjust, or impractical, the axiom may be too broad or incorrectly stated.

Upward abstraction discovers the axiom. Downward application verifies it.

Preserve the Provenance

The originating case should not disappear after the axiom is adopted.

The doctrinal record should preserve:

- the case or problem that initiated development;
- the identified mechanism;
- the harm;
- competing formulations;
- universal tests performed;
- reasons for classification;
- relationship to principles and rules;
- revision history.

This provenance allows successors to understand why the axiom exists without making the historical case part of the axiom's operative text.

The Doctrine governs. The Primer and supporting records explain.

Governing Principle

The governing principle is:

A special case may reveal a universal truth, but no proposition shall be elevated into an axiom until its accidental details have been removed and its authority has survived impartial, cross-context, and downward application testing.

The corresponding drafting rule is:

The drafter shall generalize from the mechanism and required condition, not merely from sympathy with the original person, event, or desired outcome.

The movement from special case to universal axiom allows Malone Doctrine to remain grounded in life without becoming captive to isolated experience. It preserves testimony, learns from injury, identifies the governing mechanism, and converts the resulting insight into authority capable of guiding people and institutions far beyond the event that first revealed it.