

THE
JOHN H. JACKSON
MOOT COURT COMPETITION

elsa
The European Law Students' Association

Development Strategy

John H. Jackson
Moot Court Competition



WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION

THE
JOHN H. JACKSON
MOOT COURT COMPETITION

PREFACE

As a simulation of the WTO Dispute Settlement procedures, the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition (JHJMCC) holds a unique position, offering law students across the world the chance to engage with and better understand international trade law in an environment. The World Trade Organization plays an essential role in upholding the principles of non-discrimination, transparency, reciprocity and sustainable practices, a commitment undertaken by the member states of the WTO.

ELSA, as the world's largest independent, non-profit association for law students and young lawyers, holds the vision of a just world where human dignity and cultural diversity are respected. Contributing to legal education are central to ELSA's mission, and the JHJMCC is among its most effective initiatives toward this goal. Through simulated hearings, the JHJMCC challenges participants to apply their legal knowledge to real-world issues in the field of international trade law, enhances their understanding of other legal systems, and fosters skills in advocacy, analysis, and cross-cultural collaboration.

*This Development Strategy of the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition reflects the commitment of ELSA to foster legal education in a dynamic and impactful way. It is essential to ensure the continuous evolution and long-term impact of the Competition. With the rapidly changing landscape of international trade law and its interaction with many other relevant fields of law, it is important to regularly update and align the Competition's objectives with the strategic goals of ELSA International and the educational needs of future participants. Such a strategy will enable the JHJMCC to **expand its reach, maintain high standards of inclusivity, and ensure equitable access to resources and knowledge** for all participants. This structured approach not only safeguards the relevance and quality of the Competition but also strengthens ELSA's vision.*

Warm regards,



Aliena Trefny

Vice President in charge of Competitions

International Board of ELSA 2024/2025

THE
JOHN H. JACKSON
MOOT COURT COMPETITION

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Goal 1: Visibility of the JHJMCC	3
Subgoal 1.1: University Outreach	3
Subgoal 1.2: Diversify Participants	4
Subgoal 1.3: Accessibility & Alumni	4
Subgoal 1.4: Assess Potential for Growth	5
Subgoal 1.5: Topicality of the Case	6
Evaluation of the Progress in Achieving These Goals	6
Goal 2: Continuous Qualitative Improvement	6
Subgoal 2.1: Sustainability of the Regional Rounds	6
Subgoal 2.2: Panellists & Networking	7
Subgoal 2.3: Memorable Experiences	8
Subgoal 2.4: Partner Retention & Increase	8
Evaluation of the Progress in Achieving These Goals	8
Goal 3: Standardisation of Resources and Knowledge Available	9
Subgoal 3.1: Equalise Opportunities	9
Subgoal 3.2: Enhance Availability of Resources	10
Subgoal 3.3: Fundraising for the Regional Rounds	10
Evaluation of the Progress in Achieving These Goals	11
Goal 4: Relevance	11
Subgoal 4.1: Implementation of Feedback	11
Subgoal 4.2: Alignment with Goals of ELSA International	12
Evaluation of the Progress in Achieving These Goals	12
Goal 5: Legacy of the JHJMCC	12

THE
JOHN H. JACKSON
MOOT COURT COMPETITION

Goal 1: Visibility of the JHJMCC

For the past 23 years, the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition has been the biggest moot court in the field of international trade law. Thanks to its global reach amongst students from around 50 countries each year, and the technical support of the World Trade Organization, it is ELSA's largest global Flagship Project and one of the most prestigious international moot courts. Participating in the JHJMCC is an "unwritten prerequisite" to get an internship at the WTO and many law firms with specialised trade law departments hire graduates based on their participation and performances in the Competition. It is not only recognisable throughout ELSA Groups all over Europe but across the whole world. However, there is still a lot of potential to increase the presence of the Competition in more countries and universities, especially in countries with no past record of participation

Subgoal 1.1: University Outreach

Our goal is to increase the visibility of the JHJMCC and broaden its outreach to more universities and institutions that are not yet familiar with the Competition. By doing so, we hope to raise awareness about the Competition, its importance, and the great opportunities it offers.

Means:

- Identify universities and institutions that have not engaged with the Competition so far;
- Engage and communicate more with the universities and institutions that have previously shown interest in the Competition;
- Reinstate communication with universities, institutions and former team members or coaches that have participated in the past, but not in recent years;
- Develop targeted promotional materials that highlight the significance of the Competition in the field of international trade law, its role in building soft skills, and its impact on students' professional development;
- Develop targeted promotional materials regarding the key elements of the Case, in order to make it more appealing to potential participants and partners;
- Engage the Academic Board, ELSA Groups, faculty staff, Panellists and coaches who have been involved in the Competition for several years, and who can act as promoters for JHJMCC within the universities and institutions in their regions;
- Collaborate with universities and faculties in order to deliver targeted webinars or information sessions dedicated to students.

Subgoal 1.2: Diversify Participants

We strive to broaden participation in the JHJMCC by reaching out to universities in underrepresented regions, with the aim of fostering diversity and providing equal opportunities across the world. Our focus is on increasing involvement from countries and regions that have had limited or no engagement in the Competition so far.

Means:

- Understand the mooted cultures in different regions and implement targeted outreach and customised promotional strategies to engage universities in underrepresented areas;
- Work with National and Local Groups, partners and the Academic Board to develop targeted promotional content, including translating materials and sharing testimonials from past participants in these regions, if available;
- Identify regions with low participation and evaluate the barriers preventing involvement in the Competition - whether financial, logistical, academic or caused by the lack of awareness;
- Provide additional guidance and resources to students from these countries, such as training sessions, webinars, and workshops on how to prepare for the JHJMCC and helping them in their efforts to secure local sponsorships;
- Create a stable pool of available coaches to liaise with teams who do not have access to a professor or a coach specialised in international trade law.

Subgoal 1.3: Accessibility & Alumni

Not only is it expensive to organise the JHJMCC, but participating in the Competition also puts a significant financial burden on some of the Teams. While many of them get sponsored by their universities or other institutions, one of the main reasons why teams drop out after having registered for the Competition is the Teams' inability to cover all the costs, including the registration and participation fees, the travel and the accommodation. On the financial level, ELSA can only provide very limited support in this regard, specifically through fee waivers. Since the Competition has many passionate Alumni, we aim to turn to them in order to secure support or contacts for potential sponsors for less privileged teams.

Means:

- Creating an Alumni database for all the Regional Rounds (particularly the ones outside Europe);
- Building a solid Alumni network through events and direct communication;

THE
JOHN H. JACKSON
MOOT COURT COMPETITION

- Creating a donation system through which Alumni can sponsor one (or several) team(s);
- Continue waiving the registration fees for teams in need and supporting them with fundraising letters for the Regional Rounds and the Final Oral Round.

Subgoal 1.4: Assess Potential for Growth

There is currently a big discrepancy between the numbers of participating Teams in the Regional Rounds, with generally over 20 teams participating in the West & South Asia Regional Round and an average of 10 teams in the All-American and the European Regional Rounds. It is therefore evident that we need to focus more on growing the less popular Regional Rounds, in order to be able to get all the Regional Rounds on the same numbers.

All in all, the ultimate goal is to ensure that the Competition remains of high quality and offers a valuable experience to all participants. Any decision to expand must take into account the long-term sustainability of the Competition and the logistical and organisational capacity (particularly referring to the Hosts) to accommodate more teams.

Means:

- Review participation data from previous editions to identify patterns in the number of participating teams, performance levels, organisational capacities and geographical representation;
- Discuss with different stakeholders - such as Regional Round Organisers, Panellists, Coaches, and the Academic Board - to better understand the reasons behind the differences in participating teams from one Regional Round to another and try to gather insight from them on ways in which we could make the Competition more appealing to the universities and students that are not already familiar with it;
- Develop an anonymised feedback form in which team members and coaches can share their thoughts about the outcome of the Competition and add questions on how they see that Jackson could improve in comparison to other international moots they have participated in (if they have).
- Get in contact with the participants of Jackson who have shared that they participated in similar moot courts (such as Vis/Jessup) and gather insight on their experiences with these moots in comparison to Jackson and their opinion on ways in which we could improve the Competition.
- Use this feedback to compare the organizational structure and the growth strategy of these competitions and how we could adapt them in order to improve and develop Jackson further.

Subgoal 1.5: Topicality of the Case

In each edition, the topic of the Case is different. Even though international trade law is a niche field of law, this holds a lot of potential for a new marketing approach for the Competition, even before the launch. We aim to use the high topicality of the Case in each edition and the diversity of these topics to increase the awareness and relevance of the Competition among potentially interested students, universities, and partners.

Means:

- Tailor the promotion strategy to the current Case, emphasising why it is relevant and beneficial for students to learn more about that specific topic;
- Post teasers about the Case before the launch;
- Promote the Competition and the topic of the Case at the WTO Public Forum to raise interest in the lines of professors, teaching assistants and university staff or potential Panellists;
- Use the topic as a selling point for specific specialised institutions and law firms with the aim of securing partnerships for the edition.

Evaluation of the Progress in Achieving These Goals

- Number of new universities and institutions engaged;
- Increase in participation from underrepresented regions;
- Diversity and representation among participants from different regions and countries;
- Feedback from different stakeholders involved in the Competition.

Goal 2: Continuous Qualitative Improvement

Each stage of the JHJMCC presents its own unique set of challenges. To continuously strengthen and improve the Competition, it is essential to create consistency and to prioritise the collection of feedback from all those involved.

Subgoal 2.1: Sustainability of the Regional Rounds

One important challenge each year is finding the Hosts for all the Regional Rounds. While the interest to host is high in some regions, some of the rounds need more attention and require a more proactive approach when it comes to recruiting the Hosts.

Once this challenge is overcome and the hosts are appointed, we need to ensure a high and as equal as possible quality throughout all the rounds. Our aim is to build on the insights and expertise of Regional Round Hosts in specific regions to improve the experience for the participants, Panellists,

partners and organisers. Coordinating an event of this scale often involves financial, logistical, and operational difficulties. One of the main responsibilities of the VP Competitions of ELSA International is supporting the Hosts to overcome these challenges and ensuring the long-term sustainability and increasing the quality of the Regional Rounds. Our goal is to improve the support framework in concrete and effective ways.

Means:

- Use contacts within the ELSA Groups, the WTO, the Academic Board, Panellists, coaches and previous participants to increase the interest and willingness to take on the challenge of organising a Regional Round;
- Regularly collect feedback and updates from Regional Round Hosts to understand challenges related to logistics, operations, and team management;
- Conduct post-event evaluation calls to identify lessons learned and highlight areas for improvement, particularly from the Organising Committees' perspectives;
- Include former Hosts in calls and training sessions with the new Regional Round Organisers to mentor them and boost knowledge-sharing, best practices, and practical tips.

Subgoal 2.2: Panellists & Networking

With international trade law being such a niche field of law and with the WTO world being a rather closed community, it can be challenging to find the necessary number of qualified Panellists for each Regional Round. At the same time, the fact that it is a small community creates a stronger network, of which the students can become part by participating in the Competition. It is essential to provide the participants with this platform to meet the Panellists and partners outside the pleading rooms, as the JHJMCC is not only a competition but also a networking event.

Means:

- Keep previous Panellists engaged in order to secure their involvement in the next editions;
- Recruit previous coaches and participants as Panellists;
- Organise briefings for the Panellists at each round to have a consistent approach to the pleading and scoring procedures;
- Organise networking events during the and the Final Oral Round and advising the Hosts of the Regional Rounds to do the same, while also encouraging students and Panellists to participate in the socials of these events, for less formal networking opportunities.

Subgoal 2.3: Memorable Experiences

To further enhance the Competition, we aim to gather insights from participants, coaches, and Panellists about their experiences. Particular attention should be given to the feedback from past editions during the transition to the new VP Competitions.

Means:

- Design a comprehensive evaluation form covering all key areas, including structure, logistics, clarity of rules, organisation, and overall satisfaction;
- Use the feedback to inform decisions and implement changes that directly improve participants' engagement and overall satisfaction.

Subgoal 2.4: Partner Retention & Increase

The John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition is the Flagship Project of ELSA that brings the most income but also comes with the most expenses, which are mainly financed with partner and sponsor contributions, apart from the registration and participation fees. While the latter is an essential part of financing the project, it is not a secret that the Competition could use more partners.

We therefore aim to retain the partners that we have and increase the number of partnerships and contributions further.

Means:

- Keep good relationships and open communication with the current sponsors & partners of the Competition, ask for their feedback and taking it into account in order to ensure that they are satisfied with the collaboration;
- Collaborate with the President of the International Board and the ELSA International Team regarding new partnership opportunities, especially focusing on law firms and universities, but also on institutions/entities that could provide in-kind support for the Final Oral Round (and the Regional Rounds);
- Look into the possibility of getting sponsorships from institutions for each specific edition of the JHJMCC, by specifically targeting them based on the topic of the current case.

Evaluation of the Progress in Achieving These Goals

- Survey response rate;
- Satisfaction of the Regional Round Hosts, participants, coaches and Panellists;
- Reduction of common and recurring challenges;

- Time to analyse and implement feedback;
- Feedback on improvements and changes;
- Number of partnerships.

Goal 3: Standardisation of Resources and Knowledge Available

To ensure fair and equal participation in the JHJMCC, we aim to provide all teams with consistent access to the tools ELSA has available through our academic partners and supporters. By acknowledging the unequal availability of educational materials and institutional support across different countries, through our resources and efforts, we hope to inspire students from diverse academic backgrounds to take part and thrive in the Competition.

Subgoal 3.1: Equalise Opportunities

Our goal is to ensure that all the participants have equal access to all the tools and resources that ELSA International provides throughout the Competition. By doing so, we both address the existent discrepancies in access to resources based on the regions, and we ensure that we provide accessibility for all potential participants.

Therefore, ELSA International can provide more targeted support and promote a more level playing field for all participating teams. Through this, we can better aim at increasing the performance quality of the teams, while having a direct impact on the Panellists' and partners' satisfaction, making it more likely for them to continue supporting the Competition.

Means:

- Research trade law platforms and law magazines available in English;
- Secure academic partnerships with these entities in order to provide free or discounted access for all the participants;
- Gather data on educational tools, legal databases, and training materials used, in order to develop the access to resources more, by including questions in the evaluation form about the tools students would find helpful to have access to in order to better prepare for the competition. Once this data is stocked, approach the most suggested companies that develop these tools and try to establish partnerships;
- Use this data to identify where additional support is needed and adapt our efforts accordingly.

Subgoal 3.2: Enhance Availability of Resources

A frequent obstacle to participation is the perception of the students that they lack the necessary skills or preparation. We aim to change that by ensuring students feel well-equipped and supported throughout the process.

Means:

- Continue and increase access of students to legal research platforms to explore free or reduced-rate access for participants;
- Create promotional content that explains the benefits of such partnerships and encourages broader participation across different academic backgrounds;
- Organise training sessions and webinars ahead of key deadlines (e.g., for Written Submissions and Regional Rounds), covering topics like research methods, submission writing, and effective oral argumentation – helping participants feel more prepared and confident.

Subgoal 3.3: Fundraising for the Regional Rounds

Given that one of the most encountered obstacles in securing more applications for the Hosts of the Regional Rounds (especially the ones outside Europe) is the lack of financial resources, ELSA could step in and provide fundraising training for both the potential hosts and the ones that have been appointed.

Means:

- Collaborating with the President, their Team and IFP Trainers members in order to establish a tailored training plan for ways of fundraising for the Regional Rounds.
- Promoting this training on our platforms right before the beginning of the Hosts application period and having open access for all interested persons to be able to join.
- Putting together an adaptation of this training to be provided to the appointed hosts, upon request, and based on the region/country/availability of resources those specific Hosts have.
- Gathering data from former Hosts regarding the partners/sponsors of the Regional Rounds from the past 5 years and putting together a database of potential contacts for the new Hosts, in case they will need it.
- Upon confirmed availability, have meetings between former Hosts and newly appointed Hosts of the Regional Rounds from the same region, where they could also share insight on how they managed to plan their budgets/fundraise before.

Evaluation of the Progress in Achieving These Goals

- Availability of resources;
- Participation rate from different educational levels;
- Partnership(s) established with legal database providers;
- Feedback from participants on available resources;
- Participation and utilisation of the opportunities provided by ELSA International;
- Reduction in disparities amongst unequal access to research materials.

Goal 4: Relevance

To ensure that the JHJMCC stays impactful and aligned with the needs of its participants and ELSA as an organisation, it is essential to continuously review and update its Development Strategy. These updates should reflect the evolving expectations of students, legal professionals, and partners, and stay in harmony with ELSA International's overarching strategic objectives.

Subgoal 4.1: Implementation of Feedback

We aim to integrate insights and suggestions from all those involved in the JHJMCC – participants, organisers, Panellists, the Academic Board and partners – into ongoing improvements of the Development Strategy. This ensures that the Competition remains responsive and relevant year after year. The insights gathered from the evaluation process each year should be compiled into a dedicated report to guide further development.

Means:

- Gather input from the different stakeholders, including the Academic Board participants, Regional Round organisers, the International Organising Committee, Panellists, and partners;
- Review recurring feedback from each edition to identify consistent areas for refinement;
- Update the Development Strategy annually based on the findings;
- Produce a yearly evaluation report, separate from the Final Report, to document suggested updates and track implementation;
- Systematically incorporate feedback from previous years, with a clear focus on long-term progress and quality assurance.

Subgoal 4.2: Alignment with Goals of ELSA International

The goal is to make sure that the development and evolution of the JHJMCC continue to align with the Strategic Plan of ELSA International and the yearly objectives set by each International Board.

Means:

- Conduct an annual review of the Development Strategy in light of the Strategic Plan and the One-Year Operational Plan of the International Board;
- Develop a clear overview mapping how JHJMCC goals align with broader organisational goals, identifying any gaps and resolving inconsistencies.

Evaluation of the Progress in Achieving These Goals

- Assessment of the feedback that is effectively implemented;
- Frequency and timeliness of updates of the Strategy;
- Alignment with the Strategic Goals of ELSA International;
- Satisfaction of stakeholders with the updates and implementation of changes.

Goal 5: Legacy of the JHJMCC

As the JHJMCC approaches its 25th edition in 2026/2027, it provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on the journey so far and celebrate the Competition's impact and achievements. The goal is to build a strong legacy that reinforces its academic standing and long-term value within the legal education landscape.

We aim to use this upcoming milestone as a platform to highlight the historical development and positive influence and impact of the JHJMCC, especially on previous participants. These moments offer a chance to honour its growth and increase visibility among students, legal professionals, and institutions.

Means:

- Begin planning promotional campaigns that tell the story of the JHJMCC, including testimonials, visuals, and key statistics;
- Start compiling a timeline of milestones and memorable moments from past editions;
- Lay the groundwork for a special marketing initiative around the anniversary to celebrate the Competition's impact and strengthen its profile within the academic and legal communities.