

## ELSA Negotiation Competition Guidelines for Virtual Rounds

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic ELSA International sets these guidelines to replace the in-person Rounds and to permit the continued participation in the competition of registered teams. This amendment of the Rules applies specifically to the ability for the teams to negotiate on a virtual platform.

Considering the circumstances, the existing Rules shall be amended as follows:

~~3.2.2 Teams are allowed to use any blank flip charts or black/white boards.~~

#### ~~4.4 Self-Reflection Period~~

~~4.4.1 Teams are allowed to prepare for the self-reflection period, without a presence of the judges for a maximum of 5 minutes.~~

~~4.4.2 Teams are allowed 5 minutes to self-evaluate their performance in front of the judges.~~

~~4.4.3 Judges are allowed to ask questions during the self-reflection period.~~

#### 4.6 Timekeeping

4.6.1 Timekeepers will indicate the elapsed time towards Judges and Teams at intervals of five minutes and where there are three, two and one minutes left, and when the end of the time allocated is reached.

4.6.2 Each Round must have a minimum of ~~two~~ one timekeeper.

The other rules of the Competition remain in effect.

The rules are amended to allow the organisers, participants and judges to conduct an efficient competition.

The reasoning behind the specific rule changes is the following:

3.2.2 The using of black or whiteboards during the negotiation would disturb the negotiation process and not be practical.

4.4 The Self-reflection Period would require the Teams to leave and re-enter the negotiation call one after another. Technical limitations and difficulties in the coordination of that process could be an obstacle for a fair evaluation and scoring process.

4.6.1 To limit the amount of people needed to participate in the negotiation call there will be only one timekeeper during the virtual round.

4.6.2 See at 4.6.1

## 1. GENERAL

- 1.1. By agreeing to participate in a Virtual Round (VR), the teams and judges acknowledge that the VR organiser has full and final discretion in managing the VR of the ELSA Negotiation Competition to ensure its technical and logistical success while maintaining academic quality and integrity.
- 1.2. The VR is an emergency measure and the VR organiser cannot be responsible for failure for Negotiation sessions to be completed because of technical difficulties – such as equipment, software, or internet failure. The VR organiser will take best available measures to resolve or mitigate any issues that may arise. The organising group cannot warrant that it will be able to resolve every failure to complete a negotiation session to a team's satisfaction.
- 1.3. Teams are reminded that these amendments are to ensure the logistical possibility to run a virtual round in an emergency situation, the other rules of the ELSA Negotiation Competition, particularly with respect to academic integrity remain in force.
- 1.4. The VR organiser will send an email to all teams announcing which team will win the Competition

## 2. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1. Microsoft Teams (or another suitable communication platform) will be used to conduct the virtual rounds. Microsoft Teams can be accessed for an individual meeting via a website from a link provided by the VR organiser. Teams do not need to download Microsoft Teams or have any special software on their computers. However, teams are encouraged to download the software and practice virtual session before the VR.
- 2.2. Team members can join from more than one location. If it is not possible for the team to be in the same location, the camera must be focused on the designated orator and the cameras and microphones of the team members not using their speaking time must be off and muted. This can be a laptop camera or a separate web camera (which may be preferable).
- 2.3. One VR organiser or timekeeper **shall be** present during the negotiation.
- 2.4. If the team members are negotiating from different locations, team members may create a separate chat for communication among team members during the negotiation session. Judges, VR organisers or individuals that are not registered members of the team **must not be** part of such a chat.
- 2.5. Each team member is responsible for finding a suitable location, which is quiet and closed to the public and where the user will have access to a desk and chair, steady reliable internet and source of power for a minimum of two hours. Locations in open hallways, libraries, cybercafes, coffee

shops, etc. are not acceptable. We strongly urge teams to choose a suitable location in advance of the VR.

- 2.6. If taking a break in the negotiations, teams must mute themselves. Team members must use a separate chat for discussing during their break if they are not in the same location.
- 2.7. Teams **may not use** phones, the internet or any other devices during the negotiation for anything but participating in the VR and internal communication.
- 2.8. By agreeing to participate in the VR, team members agree to the sharing of their email addresses and mobile telephone numbers with the VR organisers.

### 3. PARTICIPATING IN THE ROUND

- 3.1. Teams must provide the VR organiser with an email address of the user(s). The VR organiser will send teams the following relevant information at least three days before the scheduled virtual negotiation session:
  - a. The number of the team they are competing against and the side they are representing;
  - b. The case applicable to the negotiation session;
  - c. The date and time of the rounds. Teams are encouraged to log in an hour before the start of the negotiation session to confirm access;
  - d. The contact email for the representative of the VR organiser coordinating the competition; and
  - e. The link to access the videoconference.
- 3.2. Judges will receive a link to the videoconference for the negotiation. Judges will also receive a link to a separate meeting where they will be able to deliberate privately and upload their score sheets.
- 3.3. The only users allowed in the videoconference are the team members, registered coaches, the judges and VR organiser.
- 3.4. One day before the scheduled competition, the VR organiser will contact the teams and the judges to verify that they can access the Microsoft Teams (or respective) platform.
- 3.5. At the beginning of each Negotiation session the judges will read out the following text and ask each team whether they affirm that they will comply:

*“Do you the students of team Number ## promise that you will abide by the rules of the ELSA Negotiation Competition and the rules for the virtual round and that you will not communicate with or accept assistance from in any way your coaches or other individuals during the oral negotiation session?”*

Each student from the participating teams must affirm that they will. The Judges will then remind that:

*“Failure to comply with the rules or to accept help from outside sources, including coaches, can result in the judges recommending your disqualification to the VR organiser.”*

- 3.6. The rule limiting teams to their team members and 2 coaches in the room or video conference remains in effect. Coaches **may not** pass notes to team members or communicate with them in any way during the negotiation session. All persons present in the room or the videoconference must be identified to the judges at the start of the session. Once the negotiation session has started, no one shall enter the room where the team is or the videoconference that was not present at the beginning. If someone leaves the room or videoconference during the session, they must seek permission from the judges to re-enter the room or videoconference after they leave. The Judges have the discretion to disqualify a team for violation of this rule.
- 3.7. Team members or coaches may not record the videoconference. The Judges and the VR organisers have the discretion to disqualify a team for violation of this rule.
- 3.8. Each member is allowed to use no more than two laptops during the negotiation session. In addition to the laptop used for the webcast, a team may use another laptop for reference. A team may also use an additional device (stopwatch) for time keeping.
- 3.9. The chat feature of Microsoft Teams will be used to announce the approach of various time limits. If teams are unable to get the judges’ attention via video, they may also use the chat to ask break. The chat **must not be** used to send messages to coaches, the other team or judges.
- 3.10. After the negotiation, judges will have an opportunity to deliberate in a separate chat. The judges must provide direct feedback to the teams at the conclusion of the negotiation session.
- 3.11. Judges must send their scores to the VR organiser via a form provided by the VR organiser.
- 3.12. The VR organiser will send an email to all teams announcing the teams moving forward to the Semi Final Rounds. The teams will be provided with the same information to conduct the semi-final as described in para. 3.1 above. The same will occur for the Grand Final of each VR.
- 3.13. Teams must ensure that they are available for, at least, two hours on the days scheduled for the preliminary rounds and all day for the Semi Final and the Grand Final Rounds.

## 4. TECHNICAL OR OTHER DIFFICULTIES

- 4.1. If a Judge is unable to join the videoconference, the other judges will wait 15 minutes. If the technical issues cannot be resolved, the negotiation session will proceed with connected judges. If the other judge manages to join later, they may only score the portion of the negotiation they actually participated in. If the other judge does not manage to join the videoconference, the team’s

score shall be determined by averaging the scores of the judges that attended the virtual negotiation.

- 4.2. Similarly, if a judge loses connection and it cannot be restored, the other judges will continue without the judge in question and may only accept scores for the portion of the negotiation the judge actually participated in.
- 4.3. If it is impossible for a negotiation session to be completed because of technical difficulties, the VR organiser will immediately explore with the teams and judges the possibility of rescheduling the negotiation session or rescheduling the uncompleted part of the negotiation session. Should rescheduling not be possible due to the availability of judges, the judges may resort to the following options:
  - a. Where part of the negotiation has been conducted, the judges present during any part of the negotiation session will decide whether it is nevertheless possible to attribute team scores.
  - b. Where no part of the negotiation has been conducted or where the judges do not consider it possible to attribute team scores, the team score will be an average of the team scores awarded in all previous negotiations, subject to any modification deemed necessary by the VR organiser and the judges.
- 4.4. Where a team does not appear within 15 minutes of the start time of their negotiation, the team forfeits the round.