

Rules

'07

ARTICLE I – ELIGIBILITY

Only full-time or part-time undergraduate law students who are enrolled at the time of the regional competition may compete.

If a winner from the regional competition completes their undergraduate degree following the first semester, they are still eligible to compete in the national competition at the NZLSA Conference later in the year.

ARTICLE II – OFFICE MEMO (CONSULTATION SITUATION)

Content

The Office Memo will contain information similar to that which a law office secretary might give to interviewing lawyers when a client has called to make an appointment.

Distribution of Office Memo

The Competitions Coordinator/Officer will distribute the Office Memo for the preliminary round at least 24 hours prior to the start of the competition.

Teams competing in the semi-final and the final rounds will receive the Office Memo no later than 10am the day following the previous round.

ARTICLE III – COMPETITION FORMAT

There will be three rounds in the regional competitions: Preliminary, Semi-final and Final rounds. Teams will be selected at each stage to go through to the next round by a panel of judges.

The interview

Each interview consists of the following:

Consultation with Client

A 25 minute consultation with the client during which the competitors are expected to elicit the relevant information, outline the problem, and propose a solution or other means of resolving the problem.

Post-consultation Period

A 10 minute post-consultation period, where the client is not present. During this time competitors review together the interview and discuss any follow-up procedures. The competitors should talk to each other loud enough to be overheard by the judges.

In this period the competitors should summarise the interview, indicate the scope of the legal work to be undertaken, and the state of legal issues that should be researched. Explanation of the position or attitude taken by the lawyers may be useful.

The 'lawyers' may also feel that some documentation is appropriate. For example, they may want to write a letter to the client confirming their retention as lawyers, the fee arrangement, etc. Or, it may be appropriate for the 'lawyers' at the conclusion of the interview to write a letter to opposing counsel or to the party with whom the client is having legal problems. Such a document may be discussed or dictated at this time.

Judges' Deliberation

Competitors will be asked to leave the room while the judges deliberate. This usually takes around 10 - 15 minutes

Feedback to Competitors

At this stage judges provide feedback to the team on their client interview and their post-consultation discussion. The feedback session should not take more than 10 minutes. Clients should not be present during this time.

Timing

From the start of the consultation with the client, to the conclusion of the post-consultation period competitors will have 35 minutes, at which point the judges will ask them to stop regardless of where competitors are in the interview or post-consultation process. Under no circumstances will the 35 minutes be extended for competitors to complete both tasks.

Competitors should limit the client consultation period to 25 minutes. If an important discussion needs to be concluded or the client initiates a new topic, competitors may continue the interview into the time allotted for the post-consultation period. This will, however, reduce the time available for their post-consultation discussion. If the extended consultation session allows an opportunity for a team to gather more information than other teams, this should be taken into consideration by the judges in making their decision.

Materials and Props

During the interview and post-consultation discussion, teams may use books, notes, and other materials. Teams may also use office props if they wish (files, desktop furnishings, business cards, etc).

Competitors will also be provided with the following materials, and may refer to them during the interview or post-consultation discussion

1. A copy of the Office Memo
2. A copy of the Rules
3. A copy of the Judging Standards and Evaluation Form

Scoring

After the round has been completed, the judges should discuss each team's performance amongst themselves. Judges are encouraged to consult with the client. Although the judges should discuss the teams together, they should individually mark each team. The team score will consist of the average of the scores awarded by the judges.

Judges should refer to Judging Standards when scoring teams.

Final Round

There will be two teams competing in the final round. However, this number may be extended to three where the format of the competition means there has been three semi-finals. The order of the teams in the final round will be determined by a draw.

The final round will be in one room with one panel of judges, and is open to the public to view. After the judges have seen the teams perform each of the judges should discuss each team's performance among themselves. Judges are encouraged to consult with the client. Although the judges should discuss the teams together, the judges should individually score the teams.

Announcement of the Winning Team

The winning team should be announced at a function to follow the final round of the competition.

ARTICLE IV – JUDGES AND SCORING

Number of Judges

There will be two judges sitting on each panel for the preliminary and semi-final rounds, and three judges for the final round. The University Competition Coordinator will make every effort to ensure that each judging panel includes at least two of the following:

1. One practising Lawyer
2. One member of faculty
3. One person with a strong background in the counselling professions (eg, a psychologist, a minister, an HR practitioner)

It is recognised that this is not always possible.

Judges Materials

All judges will receive:

1. A copy of the Office Memo for the round they will be judging;
2. A copy of the Rules;
3. A detailed confidential memorandum about the client's background and concerns;
4. A copy of the Judging Standards and Evaluation Form; and
5. A copy of the Instructions for Judging

Scoring

All judges, as well as competitors, receive a copy of the Russell McVeagh Client Interviewing Competition Judging Standards. Judges are instructed that the Standards are to be used as guidelines in scoring the competition. Considering the nature of the competition it is not possible for judges to adhere strictly to totally objective guidelines. Judges are to take notes as they observe each team's performance, and should base their feedback to competitors on specific observations from their notes.

ARTICLE V – CLIENTS

The University Competitions' Coordinator is responsible for selecting persons to play the role of the client for each of the rounds.

All clients will receive:

1. A copy of the Office Memo;
2. A detailed confidential memorandum concerning the client's background and concerns;
3. A copy of the Rules; and
4. A copy of the Judging Standards.

ARTICLE VI – GENERAL RULES

Team Members

Each team consists of two students. Team members are free to decide how they will divide their work, but both students must interview the client as a team and their plan is subject to judging. The competitor may wish to explain to the judges why they worked together in the way that they did during their post-consultation discussion.

Disclosure

Competitors and observers are not to discuss the details of the consultation situation with other competitors who have not yet completed their interviews.

Draw

Team selection for rooms and order of presentation will be random, and executed by the University Competitions' Coordinator.

Prohibited Communication

No observer shall attempt to communicate in any way with any team members during the course of their interview.

Disputes

Any disputes regarding the conduct of any team should be handled at the discretion of the University Competitions' Coordinator.