

# Judge Instructions and Guidelines

## General Instructions

- All judges are to report to their assigned rooms at least five minutes before the time the contest round is scheduled to begin.
- Each judge's ballot is to be secured from contest official and returned immediately following each round. If online ballots are used, judges should follow tournament procedure for opening their ballot and submitting their ballot within the allotted time.
- Read the instructions on the ballot.
- Do not confer with other judges.
- Judges should not interrupt the flow of debates or contests in any way. They are silent evaluators and should not reveal their decision.
- College-age judges are permitted at the discretion of the District Committee. Current high school students may not judge any portion of the district tournament series.
- All judges are expected to adhere to the Code of Honor and recuse themselves from any round in which there is a conflict of interest per the policy below.

## Statement on Conflicts of Interest in Judging

Fair competition requires not merely the absence of impropriety but also the absence of the *appearance* of impropriety. A conflict of interest is a relationship that might reasonably be thought to bias a judge toward or against a competitor. Such relationships may themselves be quite innocent, but they could reasonably be thought to compromise a judge's impartiality.

A judge **must** recuse himself from judging a student under the following conditions:

1. The judge and the student may be perceived to have a competitive or financial agreement that may bias the judge's impartial evaluation of the round. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - A. The student attends a school (or a collaboration of schools) that the judge attended, coached for, or competed with. **NOTE:** Two potential exceptions to this guideline would be that if a designated committee felt that enough time has passed since that judge's attendance at the school to resolve concerns of impropriety. In addition, if both coaches felt comfortable with a judge that graduated from a school of one of the competitors, the tab room may allow that judge placement.
  - B. The judge has a paid or unpaid coaching, consulting, or judging relationship with the student or school during the same academic year. **NOTE:** Serving a tournament-hired judge does not constitute a conflict of interest.
  - C. The judge has received or provided expressed or implied offers to provide future coaching, consulting, or judging to a school or student.

- D. The judge has provided exclusive pre-round preparation to a student either before or during a tournament through any method including electronically, verbally, or through the transfer of resources. **NOTE:** Sharing of information does not constitute preparation, but the discussion of strategies, arguments, evidence, etc., would constitute preparation. If such preparation is provided during a tournament, the judge should immediately (before pairings are released) recuse themselves from judging the student they prepared for the rest of the tournament. If practice rounds before or during the tournament has occurred between schools that a judge is fulfilling obligations for and could potentially judge, that would be defined as preparation and all parties should consider that a conflict.
2. The judge and the student may be perceived to have a personal or social arrangement that may bias the judge's impartial evaluation of the round. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - A. The judge and the student may be perceived to have had a personal relationship that may bias the judge's impartial evaluation of the round.
  - B. The judge and the student are or have been in a familial, physical, or emotional relationship.
  - C. The judge and the student have communications of a personal nature over email, telephone, or the internet including social networking sites that goes beyond causal exchanges. For example, communications that are extensive and/or repetitive may create a conflict. Judges who socialize with the student outside of the competition arena are considered to have established a personal or social relationship with that student.
3. The judge does not believe they are able to fairly and impartially adjudicate a competition involving a particular student for whatever reason.

Judges may **choose** to recuse themselves from adjudicating a student under the following conditions. (If these conditions exist, it is the affirmative duty of the judge to make such information publicly available prior to the round beginning.)

1. The judge shares transportation and/or lodging with the student's team on a regular basis.
2. The judge has a personal, financial, or familial relationship with the student's coach or member of the student's family.
3. The judge is an administrator of, currently employed by, or anticipates employment from a forensic-related enterprise with whom a financial or advisory relationship exists or is sought with the student. **NOTE:** These guidelines do not prohibit lab leaders/institute staff from judging their lab students; however, if those lab leaders maintain consistent contact with those students and/or engage in personal relationships with them, they should recuse themselves from judging those specific individuals.

*The expectation of competitors, judges, and coaches is to engage in the highest levels of professionalism and integrity. While the responsibility is on judges to aid transparency, the responsibility exists for coaches and student competitors as well. It is the affirmative duty of all coaches*

*and debaters to assist efforts in transparency. No decisions will be modified as a result of disclosed information.*