

ALSA Client Interview Rules

1. COMPETITION NAME	
1.1	This competition will be known as the Australian Law Students' Association (ALSA) Norton Rose Client Interview Championship ("the Championship").
2. DEFINITIONS	
2.1	Affiliated law school: As defined by the ALSA Constitution.
2.2	Championship: The ALSA Norton Rose Client Interview.
2.3	Conference: The ALSA Clayton Utz Conference.
2.4	Convenor: The ALSA Conference Convenor or Convenors.
2.5	President: The ALSA President
3. REGISTRATION	
3.1	By entering this Championship, all competitors agree to be bound by the Championship Rules outlined in this document, as well as in the ALSA Appeals Procedure By-Law, and the ALSA Constitution.
3.2	Each affiliated law school may nominate a team of two (2) people to compete in the Championship.
3.3	The two (2) nominated members shall remain the same for the duration of the Conference.
3.4	If invited by the President and the Convenor, teams from non-affiliated law schools may enter the competition, provided that their competitors comply with all other competition rules.
3.5	Team members must not have graduated with a law degree in any jurisdiction.
3.6	Competitors must register by the registration date as set by the Convenor.
3.7	Competitors are not permitted to register for multiple competitions during the Conference subject to 3.7.1.
3.7.1	A competitor, at the discretion of their affiliated law school, may be registered in this championship and the Paper Presentation Championship.
Penalty:	Any contravention of a rule of section 3 may result in disqualification.
4. COMPETITION STRUCTURE	
4.1	The Championship is comprised of three (3) Preliminary Rounds; a Quarter Final; a Semi Final; and a Grand Final. Each client interview will consist of at least two (2) sides.
4.2	In the event that less than ten (10) teams enter the competition there will be no Quarter Final Round and the top four (4) teams will progress through to the Semi Final Round.
5. PRELIMINARY ROUNDS	
5.1	All teams will compete in each Preliminary Round.
5.2	Competitors may not observe, nor are they to be briefed on, proceedings of a Preliminary Round in which they are not competing. This does not apply if competitors have already competed within that Round.
Penalty:	Any contravention of 5.1 or 5.2 may result in disqualification.
5.3	Teams will be randomly allocated to sides. Every endeavour will be made to ensure that a team is not disadvantaged by the draw and will not meet the same team twice in the Preliminary Rounds.
5.3.1	In the case of an uneven number of competitors, the Conference Team, in conjunction with the host University or Universities, will provide swing competitors to ensure each competitor has an adversary.
5.3.1.1	Three (3) teams will be randomly allocated to interview one after the other.
6. PROGRESSION AND SCORING	
6.1	Teams will progress through to the Quarter Final based on the following procedure of ranking:
6.1.1	The eight (8) teams with the highest win-loss ratios will automatically progress through.

6.1.2	If two or more teams have tied win-loss ratios they will be awarded a number of points based on the distance of their scores in a given round (measured by standard deviation) from the average margin of that round. These points, from each round, will be added to form a combined aggregate score. The teams with the highest combined aggregate scores will progress through. The procedure for determining this schedule will be:
6.1.2.1	Add all winning margins of each team to form an aggregate of margins.
6.1.2.2	Divide the previous result by the number of winning teams. This is the arithmetic average (the mean).
6.1.2.3	Subtract the arithmetic average (calculated from 6.1.2.2) from the first score.
6.1.2.4	Square the result in 6.1.2.3.
6.1.2.5	Repeat step 6.1.2.3 for the second score, third score and so on until all scores have been used.
6.1.2.6	Add up all the results produced from step 6.1.2.4 until all numbers have been added up.
6.1.2.7	Divide the result in 6.1.2.6 by the total number of winning teams.
6.1.2.8	Take the square root of the result in 6.1.2.7. This is the standard deviation.
6.1.3	In the event that the teams still remain tied, teams will be awarded negative points for rounds that have been lost. The number of points deducted will be based on the distance of their scores in a given round (measured by standard deviation) from the average margin of that round.
6.1.4	Should the teams remain tied after all other methods of deciding a winner have been exhausted, a coin toss conducted by the Competition Director(s) will decide who progresses through.
Appeals:	Where a team believes that these rules have been incorrectly applied, an appeal should be lodged to the Conference Board of Appeals.
7. QUARTER FINALS	
7.1	Competitors may not observe, nor are they to be briefed on, proceedings of a Final Round in which they are not competing. This does not apply if competitors have already competed within that Round, nor if they no longer remain in the competition.
Penalty:	Any contravention of 7.1 may result in disqualification.
7.2	The draw for the Quarter Final will be seeded based on the procedure of ranking in 6.1.
7.3	Teams will be allocated sides by random draw.
7.4	Quarter Finalists will be announced after the conclusion of the Preliminary Rounds and teams will be informed of their side. Each team will only compete once in the Quarter Final Round.
Appeals:	Where a team believes that these rules have been incorrectly applied, an appeal should be lodged to the Conference Board of Appeals.
8. SEMI FINALS	
8.1	The winners of each Quarter Final round progress to the Semi Finals.
8.2	Semi Finalists will be announced after the conclusion of the Quarter Finals. Each team will only compete once in the Semi Final Round.
8.3	Teams will be allocated sides by random draw.
Appeals:	Where a team believes that these rules have been incorrectly applied, an appeal should be lodged to the Conference Board of Appeals.
9. GRAND FINAL	
9.1	The winning team from each Semi Final will proceed to the Grand Final.
9.2	Semi and Grand Finalists will be notified of their progression to the next round on the day the Quarter Finals and Semi Finals respectively take place.
9.3	The winners of the Grand Final will be notified at the ALSA Conference Closing Dinner.
9.4	Method of determining the Australian Champion
9.4.1	In the event, the competition is won by an Australian team, that team shall be deemed the Australian Champion.
9.4.2	In the event the highest placed Australian team is the runner-up, that team shall be deemed the Australian Champion.
9.4.3	In the event the highest placed Australian team is a losing semi-finalist, that team shall be deemed the Australian champion unless both losing semi-finalists are Australian teams.

9.4.4	In the event both losing semi-finalists are Australian teams and no Australian team progresses to the Grand Final, the Conference organisers shall host an Australian final between those two teams. The winner of this final shall be deemed the Australian Champion.
9.4.5	In the event the highest placed Australian team is a losing quarter-finalist. The highest ranked Australian team according to the scoring methodology shall be deemed the Australian Champion unless only two Australian teams progress to the quarter-finals.
9.4.6	In the event only two Australian teams progress to the quarter-finals and both those teams fail to progress to the semi-finals, the Conference organisers shall host an Australian final between those two teams. The winner of this final shall be deemed the Australian Champion.
9.4.7	In the event the highest placed Australian team does not qualify for the quarter-finals. The highest ranked Australian team according to the scoring methodology shall be deemed the Australian Champion.
9.4.8	The Australian runner-up shall be the Australian team that progressed the second furthest into the elimination rounds. In the event two or more Australian teams would qualify to be Australian runner-up on this basis, the team ranked highest according to rule 6.1 will be deemed the Australian runner-up.
10. RELEASE OF QUESTIONS	
10.1	Preliminary Round Questions
10.1.1	Questions for the Preliminary Rounds will be released on the ALSA or Conference website three (3) weeks prior to the start of competition.
10.1.2	ALSA Council will be notified on the same day via email.
10.1.3	Competitors will be asked to prepare a different question for each Preliminary Round.
10.2	The draw for the Preliminary Rounds will be released onto the ALSA or Conference website and emailed to the ALSA Council at the same time as problem is released three (3) weeks prior to the start of competition.
10.3	Final Rounds Questions
10.3.1	Problem questions for the Quarter Final will be released at the conclusion of the Preliminary Rounds.
10.3.2	Problem questions for the Semi Final will be released at the conclusion of the Quarter Final.
10.3.3	Problem questions for the Grand Final will be released at the conclusion of the Semi Final.
10.4	All questions must be specifically written for the Conference.
10.5	Every effort will be made to ensure that problems are constructed in a way that does not disadvantage or advantage participants from any particular jurisdiction.
11. RESEARCH AND PREPARATION	
11.1	All research and preparation for the rounds must be conducted solely by team members. Team members may receive general advice and assistance with respect to skills relevant to the competition prior to the release of the question. After the release of the question until the completion of the championship competitors may not receive any advice or assistance.
Penalty:	Any contravention of 11.1 may result in disqualification.
	Access to electronic materials such as laptops are forbidden. Mobile phones may be used only for the purposes of personal timekeeping.
Penalty:	Any contravention of 11.2 may result in disqualification
11.3	No one, including Faculty Advisers, may attempt to communicate in any way with any of the competitors during a round, from the beginning of the team's client interview session to the conclusion of that team's self analysis.
Penalty:	Any contravention of 11.3 may result in disqualification.
11.4	Subject to 11.3, the mere act of intended communication or intended receipt of information proscribed by this rule constitutes a breach of the rules, regardless of the substance thereof and regardless of whether initiated by a participant or by any other person.
11.5	If a team mistakenly receives material meant for the client they must report the occurrence immediately to the organisers who will decide on an equitable course of action. Failure to report this to the organisers will result in disqualification.

11.5.1	Innocent mistake is not a defence to a complaint based on this rule.
11.5.2	Casual exchanges related to the substance of the client interview are enough to constitute a breach under 11.3 or 11.4.
Penalty:	Any contravention of 11.5 may result in disqualification.
12. CLIENTS	
12.1	Clients will be supplied by the Conference Team.
12.2	Clients must not be from either team's University.
12.3	Clients will receive their materials at least one (1) hour before the commencement of that round.
12.4	Client materials will comprise the consultation situation and a detailed confidential memorandum concerning the client's background and concerns.
12.5	Clients are to be advised that their 'performance' commences as soon as they step into the client interview.
12.6	Clients will be permitted to refer to their instructions whilst being interviewed.
12.7	Clients will be asked to give their feedback to judges after each interview, outlining their level of confidence in the team's handling of their situation and any other relevant comments.
13. DETAILS OF THE ACTUAL COMPETITION	
13.1	Each round should last for two sets of forty-five (45) minutes (one for each team).
13.1.1	First, thirty (30) minutes of each set are devoted to a consultation with the client during which competitors are expected to elicit the relevant information, outline the problem, and propose a solution or other means of resolving the problem.
13.1.2	There will be a warning one (1) minute before the end of the consultation.
13.1.3	Judges may grant an extension of time of up to five (5) minutes per team.
13.1.4	A competitor must stop speaking when asked to do so by the Judge.
Penalty:	Penalty: Continuation of interview beyond 30 minutes without the Judge's express permission after thirty (30) seconds have elapsed: one (1) mark for every minute or part thereof.
Penalty:	Penalty Continuation of self-analysis beyond 10 minutes after thirty (30) seconds have elapsed: one (1) mark for every minute or part thereof.
13.2	Second, teams will have a UP TO fifteen (15) minute post-consultation period, make a 'fly on the wall' presentation to the judges. This is a reflective dialogue between you and your partner, evaluating your performance, identifying the problems with the interview/client and your potential areas for improvement.
13.2.1 (Not applicable)	Five (5) minutes where the competitors leave the room and privately prepare for their evaluation by the judges. The post-consultation explanation may summarise the interview, indicate the scope of the legal work to be undertaken, and state the legal issues that should be researched. Explanation of the position or attitude taken by the competitors may be useful.
13.3	Third, the judges should then provide the team with a critique of the team's handling of the consultation and post consultation periods. The critique should last no more than ten (10) minutes. Clients must not be present during the critique.
13.4	Team members are free to decide how they will divide their work, but both competitors must interview the client as a team and their plan will be judged accordingly. The students may wish to explain their strategy and teamwork to the judges during their post-consultation explanation.
13.5	During the interview and post-consultation explanation, the team may use books, notes, and other materials.
13.7	If a competitor is more than five (5) minutes late for the commencement of the round. Two (2) marks per five (5) minutes or part thereof.
14. TIMEKEEPING	
14.1	

14.2	If resources and volunteers are available, timekeepers and timekeeping devices may be provided and in such cases will be solely responsible for all time keeping and penalties. A timekeeper shall not be an individual from the same University as any Competitor in that particular round.
14.3	Decisions by the judges as to elapsed time are final and non-reviewable, except in cases where the error is plain and substantial. Minor errors will be non-reviewable.
14.4	Observation of the Championship is encouraged, however potential for disruption must be minimized. Observers should not enter or leave the room during the interview or post-consultation self-reflection.
14.5	Competitors may not observe another team's Client Interview if they are yet to conduct their Client Interview with the same problem in the same round.
14.6	No observer is permitted to attempt to communicate in any way with any team members from the beginning of the team's interview to the conclusion of the last post-consultation self-reflection. Any communication in breach of this rule may result in disqualification.
Penalty: Any contravention of 13.6 may result in disqualification.	
15. JUDGING	
15.1	
15.2	All judges must have suitable legal qualifications, or relevant experience. Judges will be judges, magistrates, legal practitioners, legal academics or others with demonstrated experience in interview competitions.
15.3	Where a faculty adviser or student is serving as a judge, he or she may not judge a round involving a competitor from that student's university.
15.4	The Preliminary Rounds will be heard by up to three (3) judges. The Final Rounds may be heard by up to five (5) judges.
15.5	Judges will be provided with:
15.5.1	The question for that round;
15.5.2	A summary of the issues in the question (at least 1 (one) page);
15.5.3	The score sheet (see Appendix 2);
15.5.4	A summary of the rules of the Championship (at least 1 (one) page).
15.6	Judges will award each team a mark out of one hundred (100).
15.7	Judges must award each team a different score; no draws are possible.
15.8	Where there is more than one judge, judges will be asked to produce one (1) score sheet between them.
15.9	Each team's score sheet will be submitted to the Competitions Director(s) or Client Interview Coordinator or a person nominated by them.
16. RELEASE OF SCORE SHEETS AND RANKINGS	
16.1	
16.2	No scores or rankings will be released until the conclusion of the competition.
16.3	At the conclusion of the competition, each competitor, ALSA representative or faculty may write to scores@alsaconference.com and request a copy of their scores. They will have one month from the conclusion of the Conference to complete this request.
16.4	At the conclusion of the one-month period, those competitors, ALSA representatives and faculty who requested their scores according to 16.5 will be sent a copy. This will occur over a two-week period.
16.5	The Conference team will also at this time release a list of rankings for the Championship.
16.6	No scores will be released except in strict accordance with these rules.
17. PENALTIES	
17.1	

		able t team
17.2	Judges shall not be notified of the application of any penalties at any time by the Competitions Director(s) or the Conference Board of Appeals.	
17.3.1	If a Judge becomes aware that a penalty has been or will be applied, they will be instructed not to take this penalty into consideration when marking the competitors.	
17.3.2	Judges do not have the discretion to dispense with the penalties to be applied under section 13 (Details of the Actual Competition),	
17.4	The Competitions Director(s) and the Conference Board of Appeals in consultation with the Conference Convenor(s), have full discretion as to the application of all penalties.	
17.5	The Competitions Director(s) and the Conference Board of Appeals in consultation with the Conference Convenor(s) also have discretion as to the deduction of marks or disqualification of a competitor or a team for any serious breach of the Rules that is not within the Rules.	
18. APPEALS		
18.1		Appe
19. FORFEITURE		
19.1		Any t team
19.2	Any team whose opponent forfeits a round will be deemed to have won that round. The team's margin will be the average of their margins from the other rounds.	
19.3	Any team which forfeits shall be excluded from progressing through to the Final Rounds.	
19.4	A forfeit will be considered to have occurred where a team withdraws later than two hours prior to the commencement of that round of competition. Any withdrawal before that time will trigger the use of a swing team in accordance with Rule 5.3.1.	
Appeals:	Conference Board of Appeals.	
20. INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS		
20.1		Shou an int the r
20.2	In the event that the highest placed Australian team (including a minimum of one (1) member competing in the Championship) is unable to attend the international competition the Australian runner-up may represent Australia.	
20.3	In the event of the inability of the Australian runner-up to attend, ALSA, in consultation with whichever such body that has requested the team, shall nominate an Australian representative who has participated in the national competition.	
Appeals:	ALSA grievance committee	