



ELSA the Netherlands
Moot Court
Competition

VIRTUAL ROUNDS ONLINE SETTING RULES

NMCC 2021

2020-2021

1. Technical Requirements

1.1 Zoom or any similar video-conferencing software programme (Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, etc) may be used to conduct the Virtual Rounds of the National Moot Court Competition of ELSA the Netherlands. Teams do not need to download or have any special software on their computers. However, students are encouraged to download the platforms chosen and practice virtual pleading before the Virtual Rounds.

1.2 Team members may join from more than one location. If it is not possible for a team to be in the same location, the camera shall be focused on the designated orator and the microphones of the team members not pleading must be off and muted.

1.3 If the members of one team are pleading from different locations, team members may create a separate chat for communication among team members during the pleadings. Individuals that are not registered members of the team may not be part of such a chat. ELSA the Netherlands calls on teams to display integrity in this respect. Breach of this rule will result in penalty point deduction or disqualification.

1.4 A team not pleading (i.e. applicant or defendant while the other party is pleading) shall mute its microphones and ensure that there is no rustling of papers or extraneous noise during the oral pleading. The President of the Bench and/or the timekeeper shall monitor and control this, including stopping time if it becomes impossible to hear an orator because of noise or other interference. If the President of the Bench needs to stop the session multiple times other than for technical reasons independent from a team, it will be at the discretion of the Bench whether to disqualify the team responsible for the disruption or to deduct points.

1.5 By agreeing to participate in the Virtual Rounds of the National Moot Court Competition of ELSA the Netherlands both judges and team members agree to the sharing of their email addresses and mobile telephone numbers with ELSA the Netherlands and the Local ELSA Groups to facilitate the scheduling of and management of the Virtual Rounds of the National Moot Court Competition of ELSA the Netherlands. ELSA the Netherlands and the Local ELSA Groups will not use this information for any other purposes.

2. Participating in the Virtual Round of the National Moot Court Competition

2.1 Each Team must provide ELSA the Netherlands and/or the Local ELSA Groups with an email address for contact. ELSA the Netherlands and/or the Local ELSA Groups will then send the team the following information at least 4 days before the scheduled pleading:

- a. The number of the team they are competing against and the side they are pleading (Applicant or Respondent);
- b. The date and time of the pleading sessions. Teams are encouraged to log in half an hour before the start of the pleading to confirm access;
- c. The contact email for the representative of ELSA the Netherlands or Local ELSA Group coordinating the pleading; and
- d. A link to access the videoconference.

2.2 Each judge will also receive a link to the videoconference for the pleading. Judges will also receive a link to a separate meeting where they will be able to deliberate privately and upload their score sheets.

2.3 Teams shall test their access to the platform at least 1 day prior to the competition. Where access is not possible, the team shall contact ELSA the Netherlands and/or Local ELSA Groups.

2.4 At the beginning of each session the President of the Bench will read out the following text and ask each team whether they affirm that they will comply:

“Do you the students of Team Number ## arguing on behalf of [NAME OF THE PARTY], solemnly promise that you will abide by the rules of the National Moot Court Competition of ELSA the Netherlands and the rules for the virtual oral pleading and that you will not communicate with or accept assistance from in any way other individuals during the oral pleading?”

2.5 Each student from the participating teams must affirm that they will. The President of the Bench will then remind that:

“Failure to comply with the rules or acceptance of help from outside sources can result in the Bench recommending your disqualification to ELSA The Netherlands.”

2.6 Team members may not record the videoconference. ELSA the Netherlands or the Bench has discretion to disqualify a team for violation of this rule.

2.7 The chat feature of the videoconferencing platform will be used for the timekeeper to announce every 5 minutes how much time is left, as well as when there is 3, 2, 1 minutes left and when the time is up. Judges may also use the chat to indicate to the chair that they would like to ask a question. If teams are unable to get the President’s attention via video, they may also use the hand-raising function and/or chat to ask for additional time. The chat may not be used to send messages to the other team or judges.

2.8 Judges will exit the virtual pleading for a maximum of 10 minutes to confer on their separate videoconference. They will then return to the virtual pleading to provide feedback. Judges may not reveal the scores to the teams. Once the feedback is complete, teams may leave the virtual pleading.

2.9 Teams agreeing to participate in virtual pleadings must make themselves available to participate fully in the Competition according to the schedule of pleadings prepared by ELSA the Netherlands and/or Local ELSA Groups. This schedule will be made available to the teams no later than four days before the first day of pleadings.

Technical or Other Difficulties

3.1 If a judge is unable to join the videoconference, the other judges shall wait for up to 15 minutes. If the technical issues cannot be resolved, the pleading will proceed provided that there are at least two judges present. No judges may join the pleadings once they have begun. The judge losing connection may participate in deliberations but may not score the teams.

3.2 If it is impossible for an oral pleading to be completed because of technical difficulties, ELSA the Netherlands / Local ELSA Group will immediately explore with the teams and Judges the possibility of rescheduling the pleadings, or rescheduling the uncompleted part of the pleadings. Should rescheduling not be possible due to the availability of judges, the judges may resort to the following options:

- a. Where both teams have had the opportunity to conduct parts of pleadings, the judges present during any part of the pleadings will decide whether it is nevertheless possible to attribute team scores;
- b. Where both teams have not had an opportunity to plead 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 oral pleadings.

3.3 Where a team does not appear with at least two team members within 15 minutes of the start time of their pleading, the team forfeits the round.

3.4 If the team member which is pleading encounters technical difficulties, the timekeeper shall stop the time and give the member the chance to solve that the problem within to 15 minutes. If the technical issues cannot be resolved within that time, another team member shall substitute for him/her.