

ESU Schools' Mace Judging Guide

Thank you very much for giving up your time to judge the ESU Schools' Mace! Below is a guide for the key principles of the competition, an explanation of the rules, and a suggested marking criteria.

Principles of Judging

The ESU Schools' Mace is a competition that is first and foremost aimed at providing young debaters around England the opportunity to grow and develop as speakers, and to build the key skills, such as analytical reasoning and the ability to use and apply relevant evidence, that debating can bring. In order to allow this to occur it is of the greatest importance that judging is carried out on a consistent basis. We therefore ask all judges to weight the elements of debating and persuasion based upon the mark scheme provided, and the guidance in this booklet.

Judges for the Schools' Mace are asked to act as a neutral, well informed global citizen. We recognise that our judges often have specific areas of expertise, whether that comes from academic work, or professional experience. We also realise it can be sometimes difficult for us to put aside personal opinions. However, in marking teams, we ask you to credit teams only in relation to their ability to build persuasive arguments and by comparison to the other team in the debate, rather than your external knowledge and understanding. The skills that we are testing and building are not those of specialist knowledge, or current affairs, but rather of their ability to take the evidence they have accumulated and build logical, rigorous and persuasive arguments.

This approach to debating reflects the fact that teams are judged both in isolation but also comparatively. Teams are judged in isolation in that skills such as reasoning and evidence, and style should be considered in relation to the mark scheme descriptors. However, the extent to which reasoning is demonstrated, and particularly in the case of listening and response, can only really be understood by comparison to other teams. It is in this we see the difference between public speaking and debating.

Finally, as part of the emphasis on providing speakers with the opportunity to grow and improve the emphasis throughout is upon providing the clearest and highest quality feedback. Whilst this is discussed later, it is worth remembering that whenever you are judging, this should be first and foremost in your mind.

Rules of the ESU Schools' Mace Format

The ESU Schools' Mace Format has a simplicity that is aimed at getting as many students and schools involved in debating as possible.

Structure of the Debate

Each debate consists of two teams, a proposition and an opposition, of three speakers. The debate begins with the first proposition speech, before moving to the first speaker of the opposition, back to the second speaker of the proposition, and finally to the second speaker of the opposition.

After the main four speeches have been completed, we move to the floor debate. This is moderated by the chair of the judging panel. In this time two or three questions to each side should be asked raise issues that had not been previously considered in the debate, or to ask for clarity or remove confusion from the arguments made by either side. This year it is likely that the judge(s) will have to take the role of the audience and ask these questions. If so, please remember that you are not

trying to win the debate or score points - ask questions that are exploratory or probing rather than attacking.

The floor debate is then followed by the summary speeches. This is delivered by the third member of each team. These begin with the opposition summary speech, and is followed by the proposition summary speech.

In 2020-21 the ESU competitions have moved online for the first time. Rounds may be affected by connection problems, technical issues and unfamiliarity with equipment from participants and/or judges. Our aim is that no participant should be disadvantaged by these.

If you have any concerns in advance please do get in touch with the competitions team at competition@esu.org. Should any issues arise during a heat, as far as possible be accommodating and supportive. Report any issues which do occur to the competitions team.

Timings and Points of Information

Each of the main four speeches is seven minutes in length. The first and last minute of each of these speeches is referred to as protected time, during which points of information from the opposing bench are not allowed. A knock on the table should be given to indicate that 1 minute and 6 minutes has passed, as well as a double knock at 7 minutes. This should be done either by the chair for the debate, or the chair of the judging panel.

A point of information is a short, ten to fifteen seconds, interjection into a speech of the opposing bench. In a point of information, a speaker should concisely raise an objection to an argument being made, ask a question or make another pertinent remark. This may be a criticism of the factual accuracy, a logical leap, or an assumption that is made in their argument.

To offer a point of information, a member of the opposing bench should seek to alert the speaker to their desire to offer a point of information, without disrupting the flow of their speech. This will probably be done by clearly signalling if on cameras, or using the Zoom hand raise function. It is the speaker's choice whether to accept a point of information or not, and a refusal can either be signalled verbally, or by 'waving a speaker down'. Speakers are expected to accept one or two points of information in their speech. Speakers who accept more should not be penalised, although it is likely that they will have less time to develop their reasoning and argumentation. Furthermore, those who accept less should not be actively deducted marks, although it is likely their listening and response will be worse, as they have not engaged as much with the ideas of others.

Summary speeches are five minutes in length, and points of information are not allowed.

Role Fulfilment

Each speaker in the debate is asked to play a specific role in the debate, something that is reflected in the mark scheme.

The first speaker for the proposition is expected to provide a definition and a mechanism for the debate. The definition should provide a clear idea of the key terms of the debate. For example, in 'This House Would Legalise All Drugs', what do we mean by 'all drugs'? Do we include all currently illegal drugs? Do we include prescription only, but currently available drugs? The mechanism is the means by which the policy will be carried out. If the debate was 'This House Would Invade Syria',

who will be invading? What means will be used for the invasion? This should then be followed by the most important two or three arguments for the proposition.

The first speaker on opposition then follows with rebuttal to the proposition in which they should aim to highlight issues with the case made by the leader of proposition. This is then followed by their main two or three arguments.

This is the pattern followed by the second speaker for proposition and opposition.

Each summary speech is five minutes, and is given by the third speaker on each side. The summary speaker plays two roles. Firstly, they must respond to the floor questions. This can either be done directly, or through reference to the rest of their arguments in the debate. Secondly, speakers should seek to provide a summary of the debate under two or three main ‘points of clash’, which seek to both clarify the debate, and demonstrate why their side won.

ESU Schools’ Mace Judging Criteria

The criteria for the ESU Schools’ Mace are weighted in the following ways:

Position	Reasoning and Evidence	Organisation and Prioritisation	Listening and Response	Expression and Delivery
First Proposition Speaker	15	10	5	10
First Opposition Speaker	10	10	10	10
Second Proposition Speaker	10	10	10	10
Second Opposition Speaker	10	10	10	10
Opposition Summary Speaker	5	5	5	5
Proposition Summary Speaker	5	5	5	5

The judging criteria for the ESU Schools’ Mace seeks to explicitly develop the constituent elements of persuasive speaking. Whilst in some formats, such as British Parliamentary, there may be a more holistic approach, this does not necessarily lead to the conscious awareness and development of a complete range of speaking skills that are required.

Reasoning and Evidence

Features: Relevancy of arguments, relevant empirical evidence to support ideas, analysed arguments from premise to conclusions.

Speeches that score highly for reasoning and evidence are highly relevant and well-constructed, providing logical and persuasive arguments for their side. They work through from basic assertions, to well justified conclusions, making use of evidence that supports their case. Arguments are not only relevant and well analysed, but also must have their importance demonstrated, and a weight given in reference to other material in the debate.

Organisation and Prioritisation

Features: marked out arguments, signposted ideas, internal structure, ranking of most relevant ideas, preference best ideas.

Speeches that show strong organisation and prioritisation are exceptionally clear in communicating ideas. They introduce the most relevant ideas and make use of them, without rushing through or introducing every possible relevant argument.

Arguments are signposted well, and it is clear when a speech moves from one idea to the next.

Listening and Response

Features: rebuttal and points of information, relevance to arguments, level of response given, prioritisation.

Speeches that score well in terms of listening and response show an incisive ability to engage with the very roots of the case presented by the opposing bench. Rather than tackling simply examples or evidence, they undermine the principles or concepts on top of which arguments are built. Speakers will aim to undermine the most important material in both rebuttal, points of information, and also their main constructive material. They will be flexible in their approach to the debate, and will weight their own ideas in reference to the opposing bench.

Expression and Delivery

Features: eye contact, hand gestures, stance, emotive language, rhetorical devices and questions, pacing.

Speeches that score highly on expression and delivery demonstrate a clear awareness of rhetoric and attempt to engage an audience. They make use of tools such as eye contact, hand gestures, and some emotive language to engage with the judges. They may make use of notes, but as a prompt, rather than to rehearse or read the speech.

When competing via Zoom, students might not have their camera turned on. They may not be able to, or may choose not to use it. It may also be difficult to see participants clearly, or see all of their movements and gestures.

Competitors should not be disadvantaged because of this. Factors such as body language and eye contact are always judged as part of the whole Expression and Delivery - there are no marks specifically 'for' specific factors. If judges are unable to assess a certain factor for any reason then they should give a score based on how well the other elements of E&D are performed.

Providing Feedback

As stated previously, the aim of the Schools' Mace is first and foremost aimed at providing young debaters across England the opportunity to grow and develop as speakers. Key to this objective is providing the highest quality of feedback.

The Process of Giving Feedback

Feedback should only be given after all debates have been completed. The chairperson of the judges should begin by addressing all speakers and highlighting both general strengths and weaknesses for the debate in relation to the mark scheme and aims of Mace debating:

‘We felt that teams were generally good at constructing strongly evidenced arguments, but at times needed to be more forthcoming with points of information’.

This should not be aimed at any specific team or individual, but rather reflective of all debates. Avoid mentioning or using speakers as examples. Try and balance negative feedback with positive feedback to avoid disheartening potentially inexperienced speakers.

Having addressed any general tips for the debate, outline the basis and criteria upon which the decision was made. Explain the basic idea and criteria for adjudicating the ESU Schools’ Mace, and advise where you felt the major differences were between teams: ‘Whilst we judge on the basis of all four criteria, we felt that the difference between teams could be most keenly seen in the quality of listening and response’.

You should then provide the school names of the teams that will break to the next round of the competition.

After the announcement you may then move to individual feedback in break-out rooms, making sure that all teams that wish to receive personal feedback can do so.

Individual Feedback

There **MUST** be a teacher or parent present when you give individual feedback.

Feedback should always be constructive and encouraging.

The most straightforward approach to feedback is to simply break down the speeches by the constituent parts of the mark scheme. You should then draw out both positive strengths, skills that they have built and should continue to make use of, as well as weaknesses that need to be focussed on to improve: ‘We felt that your use of examples was very good, however at times you needed to spend more time explaining why these examples were relevant to this specific debate.’ Try and be as specific to their speeches and content as possible, rather than simply speaking in generalisations.

You should also explain the relevant strengths and weaknesses of a team in relation to the teams that progressed or performed better. You should always keep this constructive and positive though: ‘Whilst we felt your use of evidence was excellent, we felt that the team that progressed were better at explaining the relevance of this evidence to this specific policy’. Again, try and be as specific as possible.