

# ESU COMPETITION LEAD HANDBOOK

2023-24



ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION  
discovering voices





# Welcome to the English-Speaking Union!

## Dear ESU Competition Lead,

Thank you so much for offering your time and expertise to be an ESU Competition Lead for our competitions. In this document you will find your **responsibilities**, the **formats** and **timings** of our competitions, our **marking criteria** and **safeguarding policy**. It is essential that our judges adhere to all criteria for judging, as teams have been coached to these criteria and will be expecting feedback relating to it. As an ESU Competition Lead, you will be tasked to ensure the smooth running of the competitions. From acting as MC via Zoom in the first round, to acting as Chair Judge at an in-person heat, your responsibilities can and will be wide-ranging.

Please never refer to a student's gender, dress sense, hairstyle or any physical characteristic, including voice. Such remarks are at best inappropriate and at worst hurtful. You may come across unfamiliar names: please give the student the respect of your best attempt at pronunciation! It is important that all Competition Leads, no matter how experienced, have read the **ESU Competition Lead Job Description** and have completed our online training. This is because both the ESU and you, as an ESU Competition Lead have a duty of care to the young people who take part in our programmes. The training we provide not only covers the rules and judging, but also alerts you to key safeguarding issues. Competition Leads have a duty of care to the young people who take part in our programmes.

The ESU Competitions Team will send you a Competition Lead Briefing prior to each heat which includes all the information you need, such as when to arrive at the host venue and

which judge will be acting as Chair.

We aim to provide each competition heat with two volunteer judges, to support you as Competition Lead on the judging panel. You will automatically be holding the role of Chair Judge unless a volunteer is very experienced and has requested this role. Should there be an even number of judges, you as Competition Lead will have a casting vote on any controversial decision. Please be aware that there may be heats that we are unable to source any volunteer judges. If this is the case you will be expected to conduct the heat without the support of volunteers. In this instance you can call on teachers or students to support with MCing and timekeeping if need be. However, it is also entirely feasible to run the heat yourself, as host and judge.

You will go through the mechanics of the marking sheets, the deliberation, the results and awards ceremony in your training. At the end of this document there are details on the art of giving **feedback**. The most important thing to remember is to keep a positive tone and to make sure any advice or guidance is given in a constructive way. We want every child to come away from each heat feeling that they have gained something from the experience, whether or not they have gone through to the next round. We do hope that you enjoy the work as an ESU Competition Lead and thank you for joining us in developing the vital oracy skills of young people.

Do reach out to us for support at any time.

**ESU Competitions Team**  
**competition@esu.org**  
**020 7529 1565**

## Principles of Safeguarding

The first and foremost priority at the ESU is the safety of our students, guests, and staff. Paramount to any of your duties assigned during a heat, is ensuring the physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of young people who participate in our competitions. Before a Competition Lead may be involved in any aspect of our competitions, they will be required to complete a **DBS check**, and undergo mandatory **safeguarding training** in line with ESU policy.

As an acting representative for the ESU, you will be responsible for safeguarding during competitions. As will be discussed in training, it is imperative that you are aware of any potential safeguarding risks for students. While students may report an incident or concern and ask for anonymity, we can never guarantee privacy and any safeguarding concerns must always be reported. Ensuring that all students are taken care of, and managing their safety will be your utmost priority. As an ESU Competition Lead, you will need to ensure that all students are accounted for, and make sure they enter and leave with a teacher, parent or guardian. During competitions, you will be required to stay until the end of the event to ensure that all students have left safely.

Along with the physical safety of students, you will also be expected to look out for their emotional and mental well-being during the competition.

## Competition Lead Responsibilities

- Support and promote the charitable objectives of the ESU, acting as an ambassador for the organisation and promoting our education programmes and opportunities
- Assist the ESU Competitions Team in ensuring competition heats run smoothly, act as point of contact for schools and volunteer judges on the day of heats
- Sit on judging panels at ESU competition heats (which may include acting as Chair Judge) offering fair, positive, constructive and unbiased feedback based on our judging criteria
- Provide accurate heat results in a timely manner to the ESU Competitions Team
- MC Zoom and in-person heats, engaging both students and audience whilst following ESU scripts
- Support volunteer judges and ensure they have a positive and rewarding experience
- Provide oversight of safeguarding requirements, in line with ESU policies
- Signpost teachers and volunteers to resources and additional support, such as through the ESU website
- Undertake training sessions for continual professional development
- Follow and promote the ESU's safeguarding and equity policies



# SCHOOLS' MACE







## Principles of Judging

As an ESU Competition Lead, you will always be on the judging panel, except for rare occurrences. Please be aware that we have never had volunteers judge the Schools' Mace previously, so this may be the first time volunteers on your judging panel have judged a heat. As the ESU Schools' Mace is a competition aimed at providing young debaters the opportunity to grow and develop as speakers and build key skills - such as analytical reasoning and the ability to use and apply relevant evidence - that debating can bring, it is of the greatest importance that judging is carried out on a consistent basis. We therefore ask all judges to weigh the elements of debating and persuasion based upon the mark scheme provided, and the guidance in this booklet.

Judges 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; but we also realise it can be sometimes difficult to put aside personal opinions. However, when 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 in isolation but also comparatively. Judgment in isolation, in the 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, it is vital the clearest and highest quality feedback is provided. Whilst this is discussed later, it is worth remembering.







## Timings and Points of Information

Each of the main first two speaker speeches are **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 (POI) is a short, 10-15 second, interjection into a speech of the opposing bench. In a POI, 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 POI, a member of the opposing bench should seek to alert the speaker of their desire to offer as such, without disrupting the flow of their speech. This can be done by, raising their hand, calmly stating 'point of information', or if on Zoom, clearly signalling on cameras or using the emoji hand raise function. It is the speaker's choice whether to accept a POI 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, regarding the motion '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 opposition speaker 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.

The summary speaker of each team 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	10	10	10	10
Proposition Summary Speaker	10	10	10	10

The judging criteria for the ESU Schools' Mace seeks to explicitly develop the fundamental elements of persuasive speaking. Whilst in some debate 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 the 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 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 certain factors for any reason then they should give a score based on how well the other elements of Expression & Delivery are performed.





## Zoom Round One

You will be given the relevant Zoom details with your judge briefing, along with a Zoom guidance document to help support for all of your Zoom queries.

The paired teams will have their cameras on (unless specified for safeguarding reasons) and have their microphones muted until it is their turn to speak, or a point of information is accepted. To raise a point of information, students will use the emoji hand button or write POI in the chat box, as well as raising their hand on screen.

You will need to enter a breakout room with judges for deliberation, so that you can privately discuss the debate. You can tell students to take a break and turn their screens/microphones off and to return at your chosen time (usually 20-30 minutes maximum). The MC script provided goes into further detail.





# PERFORMING SHAKESPEARE COMPETITION





This is a unique national competition for students in Years 7-9 at the very start of secondary education. Now in its 13th year, it is the ESU's fastest-growing competition. While there is a competitive element, this is a framework to support the engagement of Key Stage 3 students with the joy of interpreting and performing Shakespeare, as well as the development of their acting and oracy skills.

The ESU Performing Shakespeare Competition is separate and distinct, but fully complementary with, Shakespeare's Globe in the heart of London, England.

## Format

The competition has four rounds:

### **Round One: an internal school selection process in which each school selects an agreed number of entries to proceed to the second round**

- Schools run their own internal competitions (completed by 17th January) using the ESU's judging criteria, but without the specific involvement of ESU staff and volunteer judges.
- This internal school competition can be as large or as small as the school wants it to be and there is no limit to the number of entries per school.
- Teachers should work with pupils to select a Shakespearean monologue or duologue for the competition. The ESU provides some sample extracts, but these are not exhaustive, and we welcome entries from any of Shakespeare's 37 plays. A performance of a Shakespearean sonnet will not be accepted.
- Monologues must be performed by a single entrant.
- For those who wish to perform as a pair, a suitable duologue should be chosen.
- Several students from the same school may perform the same monologue or duologue in any round of the competition.
- Students may change their piece throughout each round of the competition, should they so wish.
- Students may not use props, music or costume in their performance; one chair per actor is permitted only.



- There are links on the competition webpage to the many teaching resources produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company Education Department and the ESU.
- Students are encouraged to wear all black clothing, but this is not a requirement, they may also wear school uniform.
- Before the extract is performed, pupils should introduce their piece with their two minutes oracy component, explaining why they have chosen their piece as well as any relevant historical context and information about their interpretation thereof.
- The acting should be no longer than three minutes in duration. The overall timing of each entry will, therefore, be a maximum of five minutes in total.
- Schools rank their monologues and duologues in place order and the ESU will inform each school of the number of monologues and duologues which can proceed to the second round.
- Schools must then submit their entry details to the ESU for the second round by the 19th January. This includes the name(s) of the student(s), as well as that of the character(s) and the scene(s) that will be performed.

### Competition Format

Beginning with Round Two, participating schools will be asked if they can provide a venue to host the round, with dates being announced upon the closing of the previous round. There are twelve Regional Finals throughout Wales and England which take place in May. The Grand Final will take place at Shakespeare's Globe, consisting of 12 performances.





## Oracy within the Competition

The ESU Performing Shakespeare Competition has two elements:

- Oracy - 2-minute introduction which the actors give to their chosen text.
- Acting – 3-minutes of monologue or duologue.

The oracy component should include:

- > the details of the play and scene selected

*This should include, but is not limited to, what piece did they select, and which act and scene are they performing. Students should also include a very brief description of the scene the audience will see. This should not be a synopsis, just a brief description of the scene to be performed.*

- > the name of the character(s) they are playing

*The student(s) will introduce which character they will be playing and provide an overview of what the character is feeling. They will provide context as the scene begins, which will be helpful to the audience and judges.*

> an answer to the question 'I/We chose this piece because'

*This is the student's(s) opportunity to express why they chose this particular scene. What message they are trying to convey and how they relate to the character and their situation.*

- > what they aim to show/achieve by the way they play the scene

*This is integral to the oracy component of the competition, as students will be able to describe their motivations and what message they are trying to communicate to the audience. The fourth marking criteria – Success in Realising Artistic Intention – involves understanding what the actor is hoping to convey.*



## Marking Criteria

The marking criteria was written with the help of a group of drama teachers and actors, as well as advice from some ESU Branches. It considers the Arts Council Level Descriptors for Key Stage 3 Drama, as well as GCSE marking schemes.

Performers are expected to 'colour' their performance by bringing vocal and/or physical skills into their interpretation of character and situation. The application of performance choices will be reflected in the Technical Skills mark. Please see below for non-exhaustive lists of performance choices.

There are four categories:

### Vocal skills

The performer modifies their use of:

- pace (rhythm, pauses)
- accent
- inflection
- intonation
- pitch
- projection

### Physical and technical skills

The performer modifies their use of:

- movement (pace, stillness)
- body language
- facial expression
- gesture
- space

### Interpretation of text

- The performer is inventive in their performance choices and demonstrates understanding of the text and character's emotion/story.

### Success in realising artistic intention

- The performer connects their Shakespeare piece to what was described in the oracy component of their performance. For example, if they disclose the feeling of heartbreak Juliet is going through in the oracy component, it needs to be visible in their performance.



## Timings and Marking

Students are encouraged to explore Shakespeare's plays themselves and select a speech which calls out to them and seems to connect with their own experiences or, indeed, from a play being studied in class.

### Timings

- The pupil(s) should start by introducing the piece; this section should be no longer than two minutes. The fourth marking criteria – Success in Realising Artistic Intention – is used to assess this.
- The subsequent acting should be no longer than three minutes in duration. The acting is assessed using all four of the marking criteria.
- The overall timing of each entry will, therefore, be of no longer than five minutes in total.
- Each student must only perform their extract in full once. They may be allowed to restart the extract if they make a mistake (the ESU recommends that the student is allowed to restart twice, before being encouraged to take a break to steady any nerves and come back to try again later in the running order). They must not, however, be given feedback and then repeat the performance again in its entirety.

### Key to Performance Grading

There are five performance gradings (five being the highest) to help you work out the overall standard of a performance. They each have a descriptor to make the performance easily categorised.

1 = 'Emerging Talent'

2 = 'Rising Star'

3 = 'Class Act'

4 = 'Leading Light'

5 = 'Show Stopping'

Criteria is laid out for gradings 1, 3 and 5 (see page 14). 2 and 4 are not described (or there would just be too many words) but fall in between the grades on either side.







## Gender Diversity & Clothing

### Gender

The ESU does not focus on gender within the competition. Students may play a character of any gender, regardless of their own gender identity. Participants are not to be judged on appearance, nor on the type of monologue or duologues they perform, but on how well they perform them. It is important that the panel removes any biases on how they believe the scene should be performed in regards to gender stereotypes, and more important to focus on the emotion displayed.

### Diversity

Whilst adjudicating the competition, Competition Leads and Volunteer Judges will not, under any circumstances, consider or comment on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic background of the participant; or likewise on clothing, hairstyles, accents or physical qualities as they are not relevant to the performances. The participant, however, may themselves wish to raise these issues when they talk about the reasons behind their choice of piece.

### Clothing

Participants are free to wear whatever they like provided that it is comfortable, neutral or dark clothing (ideally black,) without slogans or anything that could be perceived as a costume. Smart clothing for the Regional and Grand Final is not required and should play no part in judging decisions.



# ESU-CHURCHILL PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION





The ESU-Churchill Public Speaking Competition is now in its 64th year and is once more being generously sponsored by the International Churchill Society. Through this competition, students are encouraged to interact with their peers in a unique format, to develop their oracy skills in a friendly and competitive environment.

The first round of the ESU-Churchill Public Speaking competition will take place via Zoom while all subsequent rounds will be held in person.

## Format

During the competition, each presentation involves three participants. The Chairperson and Questioner of one school are partnered up with the Speaker from another school.

20-30 minutes before the first presentation, the Chairperson and Questioner of each school team are told with which Speaker they will be working. They are then given time to prepare by asking the Speaker questions about their personal connection to the topic, and the approach they intend to take in their speech.

Each presentation lasts for fourteen minutes. The time breakdown for the presentation is:

Duration	Guest Speaker	Chairperson	Questioner
<b>1 minute</b>		Introduction	
<b>5 minutes</b>	Speech		
<b>4 minutes</b>	Questioner's Questions		Questioner's Questions
<b>2 minutes</b>	Audience Questions		
<b>2 minutes</b>		Summary	

A Timekeeper will give an audible signal when the Speaker's five minutes have elapsed, and after 14 minutes when the presentation should have finished. It is, however, the responsibility of the Chairperson to ensure that the presentation runs according to time and fits within the 14 minutes allocated.

Judges need not worry about time infringements during the presentations since the timekeeper will inform them of any serious infringements after the end of the presentations.





## Introduction to the Marking Criteria

Whilst the three roles are marked separately, it is worth noting throughout that the Public Speaking Competition is very much a team effort and should be marked accordingly. The best teams will be those that show strength in all three roles, rather than relying on a single member who covers up for deficiencies in the other two roles.

Adjudication is given on the basis of three main criteria;

1. Content
2. Effectiveness in role
3. Style

These criteria are weighted in the following manner:

	Content	Effectiveness in Role	Style
Chairperson (30)	15	10	5
Speaker (40)	20	10	10
Questioner (30)	15	10	5

Numerical scores are only a guideline for discussions and so the panel should talk about the strengths and weaknesses of each participant and to try and reach agreement.

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the ESU has listened carefully to feedback on hybrid models. This year we are going to mark a slightly clearer difference between online and in-person events.

In general, we will expect cameras on when speaking, as this enables speakers to engage their audience with passion and is vital for variations in body language including eye contact and hand gestures. Please note however, that if a student or guardian raises safeguarding concerns regarding their camera being on, please be considerate and understanding of their position and concerns, and be sure to include it in your post heat report.



As a general guide, the marks should be distributed in the following way:

### Chairperson and Questioner

Standard	Content	Style	Effectiveness in Role	Overall
<b>Exceptional</b>	13 – 15	5	9 – 10	26 – 30
<b>Very Good</b>	10 – 12	4	8 – 9	21 – 25
<b>Good</b>	7 – 9	3	7 – 8	16 – 20
<b>Satisfactory</b>	4 – 6	2	5 – 6	11 – 15
<b>Poor</b>	0 – 3	0 - 1	0 – 4	0 – 10

### Speaker

Standard	Content	Style	Effectiveness in Role	Overall
<b>Exceptional</b>	17 – 20	9 – 10	9 – 10	33 – 40
<b>Very Good</b>	13 – 16	8 – 9	8 – 9	25 – 32
<b>Good</b>	9 – 12	7 – 8	7 – 8	17 – 24
<b>Satisfactory</b>	5 – 8	5 – 6	5 – 6	9 – 16
<b>Poor</b>	0 – 4	0 – 4	0 – 4	0 – 8

Below is a description of the expected performance per role. Team members will vary in their ability to execute that role (see marking table above).

Should one of the presentations touch on a topic about which a judge has specialist knowledge, they should try to put aside personal biases and assess how well the speaker meets the judging criteria, not whether they are always correct. While factual accuracy is important, judges should remember the age of the participants and temper expectations.

Judges' personal preferences for style should not have a bearing on marking a speech. Various styles and tone are part of a presentation and what matters is how well suited they are to the topic and content.





## Chairperson

### Content

- *Makes a relevant introduction demonstrating interest in the topic*
- *Effectively links the Speaker and topic*
- *Summarises key themes of the presentation at the end*

### Effectiveness in Role

- *Creates a warm and friendly atmosphere*
- *Introduces speaker and questioner*
- *Manages the audience questions, asking for re-phrasing or repetition, or re-asking the question directly where appropriate*
- *Effectively manages time, ensuring presentations do not over run or spend too much time on any one section of the presentation*

### Style

- *Ensures speakers feel welcome and appreciated and lead applause*
- *Interrupts firmly but politely to keep participants to time*

## Speaker

### Content

- *Shows evidence of careful consideration of topic and delivers a logical case*
- *Gives arguments supported by evidence, and relevant analogies*
- *Considers alternative viewpoints to their own*

### Effectiveness in Role

- *Employs a clear structure that is easy to follow*
- *Spontaneous comments where appropriate to be rewarded*
- *Answers questions comprehensively yet succinctly, demonstrating a greater knowledge of the topic over and above that displayed in the speech*

### Style

- *Use of sheets or notes appropriate, but does not over rely on them*
- *Does not appear to have memorised the speech*
- *Natural fluid style that makes use of carefully chosen language and rhetoric.*
- *Seeks to draw an audience in with tools such as good eye contact, and appropriate body language*





## Questioner

### Content

- Asks relevant questions that show they have listened to the speech as given, not merely pre-prepared questions
- Shows evidence of understanding of the topic by introducing other aspects where appropriate

### Effectiveness in Role

- *Attempts to deepen understanding of the topic, and add clarity where necessary*
- *Suggestions of alternative lines of argumentation or views*
- *Offers clear and succinct questions*
- *Willingness to ask follow up questions where appropriate*

### Style

- *Employs a non-combative style, being courteous but probing*
- *Engages in a friendly dialogue with the speaker in the questioning period*
- *Good use of stance, gesture, and eye contact to include the audience in the questioning period*

## Zoom - Round One

You will be given the relevant Zoom details with your judge briefing, along with a Zoom guidance document to help support for all of your Zoom queries.

You will need to put paired students into their own breakout rooms for their 15 minutes preparation time.

Once back in the 'room', the paired teams will have their cameras on (unless specified for safeguarding reasons) and have their microphones muted until it is their turn to speak, or they have a question.

You will need to enter a breakout room with judges for deliberation, so that you can privately discuss the speeches. You can tell students to take a break and turn their screens/microphones off and to return at your chosen time (usually 20-30 minutes maximum).



# ALL COMPETITIONS



## Volunteer Judges

Throughout the competitions, you will be working closely with our volunteer judges. Volunteers are an especially important part of the ESU. In giving their time, energy, and expertise, volunteers help the ESU reach its charitable goals. As an ESU Competition Lead it will be your responsibility to sit on the judging panel with them, introduce the judges to the audience and act as their point of contact on the day of the competition. Please ensure you understand the role of a Volunteer Judge.

As stated earlier, each competition aims to have at least three judges per heat, although this is not guaranteed. While you will be sitting on the judging panel, the other two positions will be held by volunteer judges. If requested, a volunteer judge may act as Chair Judge, who will cast the deciding vote on split decisions. If a volunteer does not request this prior to the competition day, you will act as Chair Judge and will have the deciding vote. Judges for our competitions are asked to act as a neutral, well-informed adjudicator. While judges often have specific areas of expertise, whether that comes from academic work, or professional experience, we expect our volunteer judges to be neutral and mark students based on the competitions outlined criteria.

All Volunteer Judges will have read the Volunteer Judge Role Description, signed the ESU Volunteer Agreement, and will have completed online training. An ESU Competition Lead's most important responsibility is safeguarding, be assured that all volunteers for the ESU have completed training and signed our safeguarding agreement. If a judge witnesses a safeguarding issue, as Competition Lead, you will be the point of contact for them to raise any concerns. If any concerns are raised please make sure to include details in your Heat Feedback Report sent to us directly after a heat. You can also contact our Safeguarding Lead Gavin Illsely: [gavin.illsely@esu.org](mailto:gavin.illsely@esu.org), 077950 75466.

## Neutrality of Judges

Judging is an inherently subjective activity. Therefore, however detached and erudite a volunteer judge may be, there will always be those who will disagree with their verdict, as everyone will respond differently. The judges' decision is, of course, final. However, these differences can sometimes be tempered if the adjudicators' independence and neutrality is evident. Volunteer adjudicators should not have an obvious affiliation with any of the participating schools in the Regional Finals or Grand Final.

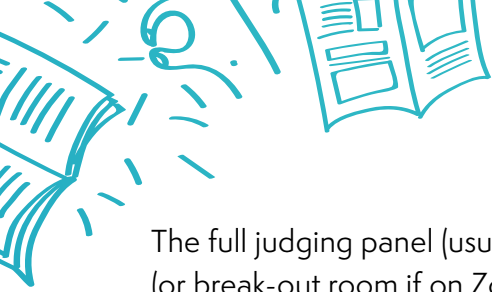
If a Competition Lead feels that they have a conflict of interest, they should say so as soon as possible, as this will help the ESU to protect the integrity of the competition and ensure fairness for all competitors. If any Volunteer judges or Competition Leads have a conflict of interest with any of the performers, they should not be on the judging panel. Potential conflicts of interest include:

- Being a friend or relative of a participant
- Being a teacher, retired or current, headteacher or governor of a participating school

Volunteer Judges/Competition Leads should not discuss their feedback during the rounds, they should rate performances individually and on their own merit.







The full judging panel (usually including yourself as Competition Lead) will retire to a separate area (or break-out room if on Zoom), to discuss their thoughts before announcing the winners and judges' commendations. Please ensure each judge is given individual time to collect their thoughts before they discuss the performances with yourself and each other.

Usually there are 3 judges but should there be an even number, 2 or 4, the Chair will have a casting vote on any controversial decision. However if the panel of judges are unable to come to a decision and the Chair is unable to steer the panel in into making one, it is your responsibility as Competition Lead to make that decision.

### **Key Dates**

Please refer to our **Key Dates Calendar** displayed on the ESU website. This can be found at the bottom of any competition page.





## Feedback

When ESU Competition Leads and Volunteer Judges are delivering feedback, it is imperative points for improvement are delivered in a constructive manner. They are to be professional, courteous, and focus on the positive aspects of what a student did while performing.

Competition Leads and Volunteer Judges should remember that the majority of the competitors do not progress beyond the Regional Final. It is therefore essential that judging is of as high a quality as possible at this stage in the competition to give all participants a sense of achievement and the awareness of having learned valuable skills from their experience. The students and their teachers will want to know what criteria their marks and feedback is based on.

Feedback is of two types: general and individual. The first must happen, the second can and should occur if time allows.

**General Feedback** happens after you have deliberated on your decisions but **BEFORE** you announce the winners. This is your chance to offer constructive feedback and advice to all of the participants. This is often done by dividing up the feedback areas between the judges, a division of labour that should be sorted out before the performances, debates or speeches start.

### **The Sandwich Method:**

Before you provide feedback, try to have a clear idea of what you would like to convey to the students; be positive and critically encouraging.

Start by illustrating the key aspect(s) you were looking for.

Then mix in a couple of things that were particularly challenging about the role and suggest ways to improve, without giving the feeling that you are telling anybody off. Do not make specific references to the competencies or difficulties encountered by specific participants. Nor should specific examples of strong performances be highlighted.



Finish by returning to give further praise and highlighting the significance of what they have just achieved.

For example: *I really liked the way you clearly signposted your mechanisms and stayed on the topic of the motion. Going forward, if you accepted a couple more Points of Information, it would highlight your listening skills and show your ability to argue against a point quickly. However, the way you used PEEL paragraphs to make your argument clear was really strong and showed your attention to detail, whilst keeping the information punchy and concise. Well done.*

**Individual Feedback** is given after the results and presentation of awards. Some students will want to make a swift exit but for those who have the time, feedback can be a useful learning experience and students should be encouraged to request it.

There **must** be teacher or parent present when you give individual feedback, as per our safeguarding policy. The vast majority of students – qualifying for the next round or not – are just keen to find out how they can do better. Some students however, can occasionally be a little tense if they have not received the verdict they wanted and it is important to remember to be encouraging.

The students, teachers and parents must accept the panel's decision and you should refer to your mark sheets for detailed comments, but the students have no right to see them. If you have a queue, move swiftly remembering these young people often have a long journey home. If a school or students have to leave before receiving feedback but they have requested it, please do type up and send any feedback or notes to the ESU competitions team to share. You can include this in your Heat Feedback Report, emailed in to **competition@esu.org** within 24 hours of the heat.

When providing feedback, consider:

- How well has this student fulfilled the role?
- In which areas did they do well?
- What other techniques could they have used to make their performance stronger?

If appropriate, give examples of how skills they demonstrated can be helpful in future careers, education etc. and give real-life examples.





# FEEDBACK TEMPLATE

Use the this page to jot down notes using the below format and support you when delivering individual feedback:

**MY FEEDBACK:** the role of...

What I was looking for; how my expectations were fulfilled:

What other techniques could have made the role even better:

## Conclusion

How can the skills they have learned doing this competition benefit them in their future lives? If you have relevant experience in your job/career/life where public speaking has been a useful/important skill to you, do say so.



## EQUITY POLICY

The English-Speaking Union is committed to providing opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds to access and develop communication skills. We expect all ESU events to be welcoming, inclusive, and to foster a safe and supportive atmosphere in which all individuals feel that they are able and encouraged to express themselves.

In such a safe space, individuals should feel that:

- They are afforded the same high level of respect that is due to all
- They are never in a position where they feel under physical or psychological threat
- They will never be judged on things they cannot change
- Their opinions and beliefs can be challenged, but will always be respected
- If their safety or well-being is threatened, others will listen and support them

The responsibility is placed on all individuals (students, school staff, ESU staff, Competition Leads, ESU members, Judges etc.) to ensure that such a safe space is created and maintained. Any person who is found to breach these rules may be excluded from this or future events.

If any individual feels that these guidelines have been violated, whether the incident was directed against them or not, they should:

- Approach any member of ESU staff at the event
- Contact a member of staff at the ESU if an issue is not, or cannot, be resolved satisfactorily at the event
- If an issue remains unresolved, direct any complaints towards the ESU Safeguarding Lead, Gavin Illsley ([gavin.illsley@esu.org](mailto:gavin.illsley@esu.org)) or to Cait Lees, Head of Education Operations ([cait.lees@esu.org](mailto:cait.lees@esu.org)).



## ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION

The ESU is a unique educational charity and membership organisation dedicated to giving young people the speaking and listening skills and cross-cultural understanding they need to thrive.

For more information about the ESU and our other educational opportunities, please email a member of the team at [competitions@esu.org](mailto:competitions@esu.org) or visit our website at [esu.org](http://esu.org).

You can also follow us on Social Media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/the.esu/>

Twitter and Instagram: [@theenglishspeakingunion](https://www.instagram.com/theenglishspeakingunion)

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