



**2022**  
**Client Interview**  
**Competition**  
**Rules**

## **1 General**

1.1 This Competition will be known as the Client Interview Competition ('Competition'). These rules apply only to the 2021 Competition and are subject to review by the ALSA Executive.

## **2 Definitions**

2.1 'Affiliated Law School': As defined by the ALSA Constitution.

2.2 'ALSA': The Australian Law Students' Association.

2.3 'ALSA Executive': As defined by the ALSA Constitution.

2.4 'Appeals Board': The Sub-Committee appointed by the Competitions Officer and the ALSA Executive.

2.5 'Appeals Process': The process of appeal outlined in the ALSA Appeals Procedure By-Law Three (3).

2.6 'Competitions Team': The Competitions Sub-Committee appointed to administrate Conference Competitions.

2.7 'Competitions Officer': As defined by the ALSA Constitution.

2.8 'Championship Coordinator': The member of the Sub-Committee appointed to administrate the Competition.

2.9 'Competitor': A law student from an affiliated law school or non-affiliate nominated by their respective LSS/A to compete.

2.10 'Graduated': A student who has had their degree conferred by their respective university.

2.11 'Law Student': A student from an affiliated law school who has not graduated and who has not received a prior degree in law in any jurisdiction.

2.12 'Observers': Any person in a round who is not a competitor, judge, or who is not affiliated with ALSA. This includes but is not limited to Team advisors.

## **3 Participation, Team Selection and Competitor Eligibility**

3.1 Each affiliated law school may nominate one (1) team of two (2) law students to compete in the Competition.

3.2 Each team may nominate one (1) person to act as their Advisor. An Advisor may be:

3.2.1 A faculty member of an affiliated law school; or,

3.2.2 A student or alumni of an affiliated law school; or,

3.2.3 A legal practitioner.

3.3 If invited by the President and Competitions Team, non-affiliated law schools may nominate teams to compete, provided that their competitors comply with the rules contained therein.

3.4 Competitors who have participated in Knockout Rounds of the Competition in previous years are prohibited from participating again. This does not bar students who have participated in the Knockout Rounds of other ALSA Competitions from participating.

**Penalty: Failure to comply with Rule 3.4 may result in disqualification at the discretion of the Appeals process.**

3.5 Affiliated law schools are prohibited from utilising the current competition problem to select their team for competition. Past Client Interview Problems may be requested by the affiliated law school for the purpose of team selection. This is in accordance with Rule 5.1.

**Penalty: Failure to comply with Rule 3.5 will result in disqualification at the discretion of the Appeals process.**

3.6 Competitors must not have graduated with a law degree in any jurisdiction before the commencement of the competition.

**Penalty: Failure to comply with Rule 3.6 will result in disqualification at the discretion of the Appeals process.**

3.7 Competitors may not be current members of the ALSA Executive or the 2021 Competitions Team.

3.8 Competitors must not be competing in other Conference Competitions in the same year.

**Penalty: Failure to comply with Rule 3.8 will result in disqualification at the discretion of the Appeals process**

## **4 Registration**

4.1 Affiliated law schools must register their competitors and advisor by the deadline set by ALSA.

Penalty: Failure to comply with Rule 4.1 will result in disqualification at the discretion of the Appeals Process.

4.2 Competitors should remain the same for the duration of the competition.

4.2.1 The Competition is deemed to have started on the day the problem is released publicly, or the date the team is registered, whichever happens later.

4.2.2 Substitution of a competitor may be allowed under exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Competitions Officer and Appeals Board. Applications for substitution must be sent to by a representative of an Affiliated Law School [competitions@alsa.asn.au](mailto:competitions@alsa.asn.au) before they take place. This means a replacement team member may not assist the team until the application has been approved by ALSA.

**Penalty: Failure to comply with Rule 4.2 may result in a penalty of five (5) points at the discretion of the Appeals Process.**

4.3 If a team withdraws from the competition, the withdrawal must be lodged by a Representative of the affiliate law school's LSS/A. If the Competitor is on their respective LSS/A, withdrawal must be received by a different member of their LSS/A.

By registering for the Competition, all competitors and affiliated law schools:

4.4 Agree to be bound by the rules contained in this document, as well as the ALSA Appeals Process, the ALSA Constitution and any other document indicated by the Coordinator.

4.5 Consent to their image being photographed, filmed and published by ALSA.

4.5.1 Competitors may request not to be photographed, filmed or published by ALSA in writing to [competitions@alsa.asn.au](mailto:competitions@alsa.asn.au) at least five (5) days in advance of the competition.

## **5 Problem Questions**

5.1 The problem questions must be specifically drafted for the 2021 Client Interview Competition and must not have been used in a previous competition, including internal competitions at affiliated law schools in the competition year.

5.2 Every effort will be made by ALSA to ensure that the problem questions are drafted in a manner so as not to disadvantage or advantage participants from any particular Australian jurisdiction.

5.3 Preliminary Round Problems

5.3.1 Teams will be asked to prepare a different Problem for each Preliminary Round.

5.3.2 The draw for the Preliminary Rounds will be released via email a week prior to the commencement of the Preliminary Rounds.

5.3.3 The Problem Memos for the Preliminary rounds will be released on the ALSA website on a date determined by the Competitions Team and the ALSA Executive.

#### 5.4 Finals Rounds Problems

5.4.1 Problem Memos for the Quarter Final and Semi Final will be released at the conclusion of the Preliminary Rounds, following the announcement of their results.

5.4.2 Problem Memos for the Grand Final will be released at the conclusion of the Semi Finals.

### **6 Competition Structure**

Regardless of whether the Competition is held online or in-person, the Competition is composed of Preliminary Rounds (see Rule 12) and Knockout Rounds (see Rule 15).

#### 6.1 Online Format

6.1.1 The Competition will be held online using a platform as decided by the Competitions Team and ALSA Executive.

6.1.2. Relevant online procedures will be communicated to competitors, judges and any affiliated law school in advance of the competition.

#### 6.2 In Person Format

6.2.1 The Competition Conference will be held physically in an Australian city decided by the Competitions Team and ALSA Executive. In 2022, the competition will be held in Meanjin (Brisbane), Queensland.

6.2.2 The Conference schedule and procedures will be communicated to competitors, judges and any affiliated law school in advance of the competition.

6.3 The Competitions Team will issue each team with an identifying team number in advance of the competition.

6.4 Competitors may be required to sign a Statement of Good Faith before the commencement of the competition, at the discretion of the Competitions Team.

### **7 Research and Preparation**

7.1 All research and preparation for the rounds must be conducted solely by competitors. Teams may receive general advice and assistance with respect to skills relevant to the competition and feedback on practices prior to the release of the question. After the release of the question and until the completion of the Competition, competitors may not receive any advice or assistance.

**Penalty: Any contravention of Rule 7.1 may result in disqualification or a deduction of points at the discretion of the Appeals Process.**

## **8 The Client Interview**

8.1 There will be one (1) team in each Competition Round.

8.2 A round should last for no more than one hour.

8.2.1 Judges are responsible for timekeeping a round. Competitors may follow along with their timers, but the time of the judge will be considered correct.

8.2.2 Thirty minutes is allocated to a consultation with the client, during which teams are expected to elicit the relevant information, outline the problem, and propose a solution or other means of resolving the problem.

8.2.3 There will be a warning one (1) minute before the end of the consultation.

8.2.4 A team must stop speaking when asked to do so by the Judge.

**Penalty: Continuation of the interview beyond 30 minutes without the Judge's express permission or beyond the extended time: one (1) mark penalty for every minute or part thereof exceeded.**

8.2.5 Five (5) minutes is allocated to an optional break for teams to prepare for self-reflection.

8.2.6 Ten (10) minutes is allocated to a self-reflection period, where the team may summarise the interview, indicate the scope of the legal work to be undertaken and state the legal issues that should be researched.

**Penalty: Continuation of self-reflection beyond 10 minutes have elapsed: one (1) mark for every minute or part thereof.**

8.2.7 Ten (10) minutes is allocated for the judge to provide feedback to the team on their interview and self-reflection.

8.2.8 Clients may not be present during the feedback.

8.3 Teams are free to use books, notes and other materials throughout the interview and self-reflection period.

8.4 Teams may not provide material to judges in any manner during the Competition.

**Penalty: Contravention of Rule 8.4 may result in a two (2) point deduction to the relevant round at the discretion of the Appeals Process.**

8.5 Competitors must not be more than ten (10) minutes late for the commencement of the round.

**Penalty: For the ten (10) minutes or part thereof the competitors are late after the start of a round, a five (5) point deduction may apply at the discretion of the Appeals Process.**

8.6 Competitors must not observe, or be briefed on, the proceedings of any round in which they are not competing (with the exception of the Grand Final).

**Penalty: Contravention of Rule 8.6 may result in disqualification at the discretion of the Appeals Process.**

### **8.7 Communication during the interview**

8.7.1 If online, competitors must not use the Chat functions to communicate with judges or the client, except where there is an issue with technology during a round.

8.7.2 If in person, competitors must not break character to speak to the judge during the client interview, except where there is an emergency.

**Penalty: Contravention of Rule 8.7.1 or 8.7.2 may result in a five (5) point deduction at the discretion of the Appeals Process.**

### **8.8 Use of electronic devices**

8.8 If online, electronic devices may only be used to establish the audio-visual link and for timekeeping purposes during a round.

8.9 If in person, electronic devices may only be used for timekeeping purposes.

8.10 Rules 8.8 and 8.9 do not apply to electronic medical devices.

**Penalty: Contravention of Rule 8.8 or 8.9 may result in a five (5) point deduction at the discretion of the Appeals Process.**

8.11 Electronic devices used for timekeeping should be on airplane mode.

8.12 Competitors are prohibited from researching the law during a round using any electronic device. They may perform online research before a round begins.

## 9 Judging and Scoring

9.1 Every effort must be undertaken by the Competitions Team and Competitors to ensure judges are not aware of the university represented by teams in the Competition.

9.2 Competitors must not reveal their university at any time during the competition.

9.2.1 If the competition is to proceed in an online format, teams should be signed into an online round as follows: [TEAM NUMBER] [Name]/[Names] (if calling in together).

9.2.2 If the competition is to proceed in an online format, clients should be signed into an online round as follows: [TEAM NUMBER] [Client].

**Penalty: Contravention of Rule 9.2 may result in a deduction or disqualification at the discretion of the Appeals Process.**

9.3 Competitors must not contact a judge after the competition unless explicitly invited to do so by that judge.

9.4 Where possible, judges will have suitable legal qualifications or relevant experience.

9.5 Prior to each round, judges will be provided with:

9.5.1 The competition problem;

9.5.2 A judging guide;

9.5.3 A summary of the key rules of the competition;

9.5.4 A scoresheet; and

9.5.5 Scoring notes.

9.6 Judges will award each team a score out of 100.

9.7 Where there is more than one judge, each judge will be asked to produce an individual scoresheet.

9.7.1 If a bench consists of more than one judge in the Preliminary Rounds, the judges' scores will be averaged for the purposes of rankings.

9.8 Judges may provide verbal feedback at the conclusion of the interview at their discretion as long as such feedback does not indirectly reveal the scores awarded in the Competition.

9.8.1 This rule does not apply to the Grand Final, where the bench will be instructed on a manner to disclose the outcome at the discretion of ALSA.



9.9 Judges must not allow teams to view or take their score sheets; judges must send their score sheets to the Competitions Team immediately following the conclusion of a round.

9.10 Competitors and Observers should leave an online call or leave the physical room while a judge deliberates.

9.11 Preliminary Round Scoresheets and Ranking may be requested within seven (7) days of the conclusion of the competition.

9.11.1 Requests must be submitted in writing to the Client Interview Coordinator.

9.11.2 Requests must be fulfilled within a reasonable time following the conclusion of the Competition.

9.11.3 Competitors may not request to view the scoresheets of other competitors.

9.11.4 Score sheets will be provided electronically.

## **10 Timekeeping and Observers**

10.1 Judges are responsible for timekeeping and adherence to allotted time limits.

10.2 Competitors may use an electronic timing device (eg. mobile phone on airplane mode) for timekeeping purposes during a round, but any discrepancy in time will be resolved in favour of the judge's record (in accordance with Rule 8.2.1).

10.3 Decisions by judges regarding time penalties are final and non-reviewable, except in cases of plain and substantial error.

10.4 Observers are encouraged to attend rounds. Applications from teams to have Observers attend rounds (online or in person) must be received by the Championship Coordinator no later than sixty (60) minutes before the commencement of a round.

10.5 The Competitions Team may restrict Observers from rounds at their discretion.

10.5.1 To minimise disruption, observers should not enter and leave a round while a competitor is speaking.

10.5.2 Observers are prohibited from communicating with competitors and judges during a round.

10.5.2.1 If the competition is online, observers must not turn on their video or microphone during a round, nor are they permitted to communicate via the Chat function. All Observers must be named [TEAM NUMBER] – Observer. Anonymity rules extend to Observers.

Penalty: Contravention of Rule 10.5.2 may result in disqualification of the Team associated with that Observer at the discretion of the Appeals Process.

## 11 Forfeits

11.1 A team who forfeits a round will:

11.1.1 Receive a mark of zero for that round;

11.1.2 Be prohibited from progressing to Knockout Rounds; and

11.1.3 Be ineligible for awards.

11.2 A team will be considered to have forfeited a round where they withdraw following the release of a memo in that round.

11.3 A team who is twenty (20) minutes late to a round will forfeit that round.

## 12 Preliminary Rounds

12.1 The competition will include three (3) preliminary rounds.

12.2 All registered teams will compete in three (3) preliminary rounds.

Penalty: Failure to comply with Rule 12.2 may result in disqualification or prohibition on participation in Knockout Rounds at the discretion of the Appeals Process.

## 13 Tiebreaks

This rule applies where:

- Due to the average points score of two (2) or more teams, the total number of teams that qualify to advance to Knockout Rounds is greater than the number listed in Rule 15.2, pursuant to Rule 15.1.1, without the operation of this rule; or,
- Due to a tie in the average points score of two (2) or more teams, Rule 15.2 cannot be resolved without this rule.

Teams will progress according to the first of the following sequentially ordered rules which apply and breaks the tie:

13.1 Where the tied teams were judged by the same judge, the decision of that judge shall determine which team will progress; then,

13.2 By random automated selection where each team has the same chance of progression after the application of Rule 13.2.1.

## **14 Progression to Knockout Rounds**

14.1 All teams will be ranked on a single ladder, based on their total points score, to determine progression.

## **15 Knockout Rounds**

15.1 Knockout Rounds will consist of a Quarter Final, Semi Final and Grand Final.

15.1.1 If fewer than ten (10) teams compete in the Preliminary Rounds, the Quarter Final will not take place.

15.2 The top eight (8) teams with the highest average points score from Preliminary Rounds will progress to Quarter Finals.

### **15.3 Quarter Finals**

15.3.1 Each team will receive a score equal to the average total score of the Judges that viewed their quarter-final; and

15.3.2 The four teams with the highest average total score will proceed to the semi-final.

### **15.4 Semi Finals**

15.4.1 Each team will receive a score equal to the average total score of the Judges that viewed their semi-final; and

15.4.2 The two teams with the highest average total score will proceed to the Grand Final.

### **15.5 Grand Final**

15.5.1 The winner of the Grand Final will be determined by a majority decision of a panel of Judges.

15.5.2 The winners of the Grand Final will be announced at the conclusion of the Round.

## **16 Clients**

16.1 Clients for the Preliminary Rounds will be supplied by the participating teams.

16.1.1 Clients are **not** permitted to share any materials or confidential facts with the teams for whom they are acting as a Client.

**Penalty: Any contravention of Rule 16.1.1 may result in disqualification or deduction of points at the discretion of the Appeals Process.**

16.2 Clients for the Knockout Rounds will be supplied by the Competitions Team

16.2.1 Clients will receive their materials at least thirty (30) minutes before the commencement of that round.

16.2.2 Client materials will include the client statement, a memo containing the client's background objectives and concerns and a sheet setting out the confidential facts in the problem.

16.3 Clients are permitted to refer to their instructions whilst being interviewed.

## **17 Conflicts of Interest**

17.1 A judge may not judge a competitor or team with whom they have a conflict of interest.

17.2 A conflict arises where, on the balance of probabilities, the relationship between a Judge and Competitor or Team would give rise to an actual or perceived bias in favour or against the Competitor.

17.3 A conflict of interest is presumed to arise, but is not limited to, situations where the Judge and Competitor:

17.3.1 Are siblings, child and parent, aunt/uncle and niece nephew or any other family relationship;

17.3.2 Are close personal friends;

17.3.3 Are currently engaged in a sexual and / or emotional relationship; or

17.3.4 Were engaged in a sexual and / or emotional relationship in the past twenty-four (24) months.

17.4 A conflict of interest will arise where, due to previous personal or professional dealings, the relationship between the Judge and the Competitor or Team creates a serious risk that the Judge will not fairly judge the Competitor or Team.

17.5 A conflict of interest will arise between a student serving as a judge and competitors from that student judge's university.

17.6 A conflict of interest will arise where a judge has graduated from the same university as the Competitor or Team.

17.6.1 This conflict should be avoided where possible, but may be allowed in Knockout Rounds, at the discretion of the Competitions Coordinator and the ALSA Executive.

## **18 Appeals**

18.1 Where a team believes these rules have been incorrectly applied, they are entitled to lodge an appeal to the Appeals Coordinator, in accordance with the Appeals Process.

18.2 Where the Conference Convenor, Competitions Officer, any member of the Competitions Team, ALSA Executive or ALSA Committee believe that any of the rules contained in this document have been breached, they may bring an appeal against a team or competitor in accordance with the Appeals Process.

18.3 The Appeals Board has the discretion to penalise a team in accordance with the rules contained in this document. In determining an appropriate penalty, they should consider, inter alia:

18.3.1 Any mitigating circumstances which explain or justify the contravention; and,

18.3.2 Any aggravating circumstances associated with the contravention.

18.4 Where a penalty is levied against a team, the penalty will be applied to the team's overall score.

18.5 Where a competitor is disqualified, their team may continue in the competition provided that two (2) competitors remain on the team.

18.6 Judges should not be notified of the application of penalties to any team, at any point of the competition.

18.6.1 If a judge becomes aware of an applicable penalty levied against a team, they will be instructed not to consider the penalty in their assessment.

18.7 The Appeals Board has full discretion as to the application of all penalties.

18.8 The Appeals Board has full discretion to disqualify or apply penalties to any team who acts in a manner contrary to the principles on which the competition is based or the interests of that competition.

## **19 Australian Champion**

19.1 If the Competition is won by an Australian team, that team is the Australian Champion.

19.2 If the highest-placed Australian team is the runner-up, that team is the Australian Champion.

19.3 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.

19.3.1 In the event both losing semi-finalists are Australian teams and no Australian team progresses to the Grand Final, the highest ranked Australian team according to the ranking methodology in Rule 16.1 shall be deemed the Australian Champion.

19.4 In the event the highest placed Australian team is a losing quarter-finalist, the highest ranked Australian team according to the ranking methodology in Rule 16.1 shall be deemed the Australian Champion unless only two Australian teams progress to the quarter-finals.

19.5 In the event only two Australian teams progress to the quarter-finals and both those teams fail to progress to the semi-finals, the highest ranked Australian team according to the ranking methodology in Rule 16.1 shall be deemed the Australian Champion.

19.6 In the event the highest placed Australian team does not qualify for Knockout Rounds, the highest ranked Australian team according to the ranking methodology in Rule 16.1 shall be deemed the Australian Champion.

19.7 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 16.1 will be deemed the Australian runner-up.

Should the Championship be used to select a representative Australian team to compete in an international competition:

19.8 The Australian Champion for that year will be put forward as a representative.

19.9 In the event that the Australian Champion (must be a minimum of one (1) member competing in the Competition) is unable to attend the international competition the Australian runner-up may represent Australia.

19.10 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.