

Helsinki Information Law Moot Court

2021 Rules of Procedure (Version 06/09/2020)

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.1 Aim and scope of the competition

The Helsinki Information Law Moot Court (“Moot”) is intended to allow for teams of students to compete in a mock trial based on information law. It is an educational program.

1.2 Teams

To be eligible for the Moot, teams must fit the following criteria:

1. Teams should consist of 2-4 active participants, all of whom must be registered as either an undergraduate or master’s level student.
2. Teams cannot include any members who are members of a bar association. Practicing lawyers that are not members of a bar association (or similar) yet shall be barred from participating if, at the time of the oral round/rounds, 6 months have passed from their graduation. This rule does not include students who have participated in a traineeship or internship programme, although these should be disclosed during the registration process. In case of doubt, the organizers will decide.
3. Each university may only be represented by a single team and each team should normally consist of students from a single university. Where a team contains students from two or more universities, those universities may not have members on more than one team.
4. Teams may also include one coach, who does not have to be associated with a university. However, the coach should normally be able to show some connection with the team/university.

1.3 Expiry of deadlines

Deadline expire at the indicated date at midnight in Helsinki.

1.4 Fair play

Participants are expected to act comply fully with the standards of academic honesty, fairness and integrity. They must show respect to all other participants, judges and organisers.

As the moot is a student competition, over coaching and unfair strategies must be avoided at all stages. Coaches should avoid contributing to the development of substantive legal points and should limit themselves to a general discussion of the issues and helping to guide students through procedural issues.

Violation of fair play procedures can result in sanctions or disqualifications, where deemed appropriate.

1.5 Language of the moot

The language of the moot will be in English. All written and oral submissions must be made in English. Sources should be used predominantly in English. Where a team wishes to rely on a source or authority that is not in English in the oral argument, they must provide an English translation. This translation does not need to be certified and may be done by members of the team, but mistranslation may result in sanctions or disqualification if there is a deliberate attempt to mislead. Sources in Finnish or Swedish do not need translation.

1.6 Organizers

The moot is organized by Sam Wrigley and Tobias Bräutigam, both affiliated with the University of Helsinki.

STRUCTURE OF THE COMPETITION

2.1 Distribution of the problem and registration

The problem will be distributed via the <https://infolawmoot.fi/> website (“**Website**”) in the beginning of September of each year.

2.2 Registration

The deadline for registration will be the first of October of each year.

Teams should be fixed at the point of registration. Any subsequent changes to teams will only be allowed exceptionally (e.g. in case of sudden illness) and must be specifically permitted by the organisers.

Teams will be given a team identification code. Teams must nominate a contact person and provide an email address of that person, used for communication about the Moot.

2.3 Clarification questions

Questions for clarifications may be submitted to the organizers via the Website till 15th October of each year. The answer to the questions received will be published on the Website on 18th October of each year.

2.4 Submission of writing pleadings

Teams must submit a memo containing two written pleadings, one on behalf of the applicant/claimant and one on behalf of the defendant. These should be submitted in word and PDF format. Submissions should be made by email to submissions [at] infolawmoot.fi.

The pleading for each side must include:

- a title page containing the team’s identifying information;
- whether the submission is on behalf of the applicant/claimant or the defendant;
- the main argumentation (max 5,000 words, not counting references);
- a list of references. The citation style should allow for easy and clear identification of each document to which they will refer and should be used consistently. The preferred referencing style is OSCOLA;
- a translated copy of any non-English-language authorities decisive for their argument relied upon (if applicable);

Each page should include the team’s identification code in a footer or header. To ensure that participants can be scored anonymously, any other identifying information should be included on the title page only. Including identifying information other than the identifying code in the substantive pleadings will be grounds for non-consideration.

After the closing date, the first-stage judges will review the written submissions and score them (see section 3, below). Teams scoring above the qualifying level (to be determined each year by the judges) will then be invited to the oral proceedings. The primary goal in this procedure is not to exclude teams, but to ensure that teams that will come to Helsinki are familiar with the facts and main legal considerations of the problem.

Late submissions will not be considered, unless exceptional circumstances apply, in which case the judges may be entitled to apply a penalty of up to five points for the written phase.

2.5 Oral proceedings

After the written proceedings, successful teams will be invited to the oral proceedings. Teams that are invited may be accompanied by a coach. The specific details of the location etc. will be confirmed in the invitation each year.

In 2021, the final hearings will likely take place over the internet. Precise details will be released as soon as they have been confirmed. Depending on the number of participating teams, there might be other locations where hearings could take place.

There are three judges per hearing. The judges will nominate a chair, who will lead the proceedings and a time keeper.

Each team includes 2 speakers during a hearing. As teams consist of 2-4 team members, they may allocate roles (applicant/claimant or respondent) in their team as they wish. Non-pleading team members may attend the hearings but must not help the pleaders. During the hearing, teams will only be required to present for either the applicant/claimant or the respondent.

The organisers will distribute a timetable for the oral proceedings in good time before the date. This timetable will include the following information

- when each round is occurring
- the time of each team's first round
- the respective role (claimant/applicant or respondent) of a particular team in a hearing
- the judges present

The precise nature of the matchups will depend on the number of teams participating and will be announced by the organisers after the completion of the written round.

Each hearing will last for 45 minutes and will use the following format:

1. The team for the applicant will present their main arguments (maximum 15 minutes)
2. The team for the respondent will present their main arguments (maximum 15 minutes)
3. The team for the applicant will be invited to reply (maximum 5 minutes)
4. The team for the respondent will be invited to reply (maximum 5 minutes)

The final five minutes shall be reserved for the judge's discretion.

Teams are responsible for keeping the time. The judges will nominate a timekeeper among themselves, which will keep track of the time and give a warning when the speakers' time has reached 1 and 0 minutes remaining. When time runs out, speakers must cease talking, unless given discretionary time from the judge to finish, for example if there were a lot of questions from judges. Where an extension is granted, judges will grant a similar extension to the other team unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. Time may not be carried from one stage of the hearing to another, nor may it be reserved for later use.

Judges are entitled to interrupt speakers and ask questions at any point. Judges should be brief.

Teams may divide the oral submissions between their members in any way they choose, but the time will not be paused while speakers change.

The scope of the applicant's reply must be limited to the respondent's main arguments. The scope of the respondent's reply must be limited to the applicant's reply.

Speakers may use notes, but should not read from a prepared speech. Where a speaker wishes to read an extract from a text, they should make sure to provide a copy of the extract for the opposing team and for each judge. Each extract should be clearly labelled and identified, with the appropriate passage sufficiently indicated. The extract should be presented in such a way that its accuracy can be verified if necessary.

Oral submissions are not limited to written submissions. However, teams must mention new authorities on which they wish to rely in the orals in their speeches and must provide written lists of such sources for both the judges and the opposing team.

After both teams have completed their submissions, judges will retire to make their decision. Decisions shall normally be given within an hour of the conclusion of the hearing.

3. JUDGING

3.1 Scoring of the written proceedings

During the written proceedings, scores will be awarded based on each team's individual merit. Scores should not be based on how well a team has done by comparison to another team or by comparison to any form of average score. The general purpose of the score is to indicate how well the team has responded to the legal problem, particularly in terms of substantive legal analysis and style.

The written proceedings will be scored on a scale of 0-30 on the following criteria:

- Correct legal analysis and argumentation (maximum 20 points). This will include a consideration of, for example:
 - Did the team correctly identify and apply appropriate weight to the legal issues in the problem?
 - Is the law correctly identified and applied?
 - Is the argument credible and well-supported by appropriate sources?
- Presentation and style (maximum 10 points). This will include a consideration of, for example:
 - Are the submissions laid out in a comprehensive, logical clear and easy-to-follow manner?
 - Do the presentations meet the required standards of grammar, spelling and linguistic accuracy?
 - Are the citations correct and consistent?
 - Is the style interesting, engaging and eloquent?
 - Answers given to judges questions were to the point, well understandable and sufficiently eloquent

Submissions will be scored by the judges, who will each give a score for each team.

Judges will have the discretion to apply penalties where appropriate, for example for:

- Non-conformity with the formalities (e.g. length of submissions)
- Failure to provide adequate or appropriate citations

- Excessive use of non-English authorities
- Late submission
- Showing disrespect for the other team or the judges

Judges will provide a score sheet for each team, indicating how many points were scored and why any penalties were applied. They will also include a brief explanation of how and why they reached this score.

Judges will pay no consideration to whether or not the teams contain native English speakers, but will take into account that the Moot is not a language competition.

3.2 Judging of the oral proceedings

After the oral proceedings, each judge will give up to 30 points to each speaker. As there are three judges, the maximum amount of points per participant in one hearing is 90 (3x 30) and the maximum of points per team is 180.

The oral proceedings will be judged on the following criteria:

- Correct legal analysis and argumentation during the main argumentation (maximum 20 points). This will include a consideration of, for example:
 - Did the team correctly identify and apply appropriate weight to the legal issues in the problem?
 - Is the law correctly identified and applied?
 - Is the argument credible and well-supported?
 - Did the speaker respond well to questions from the judge?
 - Did the speaker use the time for the reply well?
 - Did the speaker address the relevant issues in the reply?
- Presentation and style (maximum 10 points). This will include a consideration of, for example:
 - Are the submissions laid out in a comprehensive, logical clear and easy-to-follow manner?
 - Do the presentations meet the required standards of grammar and linguistic accuracy?
 - Is the style interesting, engaging and eloquent?
- Did the speaker seem confident in the material and their arguments? Judges may take into account whether an argument was understandable, but should not give native speakers extra (or minus) points on behalf of their English skills.

3.3 Registration of points and feedback

After a hearing, the judges will retreat to a room dedicated for judges. The chair will encourage an open debate about the hearing, where different aspects on the strengths and weaknesses of the speakers are brought forward. Each judge will after that provide an individual score on a scoring sheet.

The chair is responsible for collecting those scoring sheets and submitting them to the organizers within 30 min after the end of the hearing.

Judges are encouraged to provide a brief explanation of how and why they reached their decisions to the speakers. They should not share the specific points they have given at this stage.

3.4 Appeals

As moot courts are relatively subjective matters, teams will not be allowed to appeal unless they believe that there is an exceptional reason. This may include, for example, a situation where a judge has unfairly discriminated against a competitor or team.

All appeals should be made to the organisers, who have discretion to decide how to handle the case. No appeal from this decision will be possible.

3.5 Publication of results

After the scoring has been completed, the organisers will publish which teams have progressed/won. The organisers will not publish or release information about an individual team's score.

4. THE WINNER

The winner of the final round shall be the winner of the competition and will be awarded with the Bird & Bird Award of best team. The best speaker shall be awarded with the Ada Lovelace award. Additional Awards will be published on the Website.

5. INTERPRETATION OF THE RULES, DEROGATIONS AND COMPLAINTS

5.1 Interpretation of the rules

The interpretation of the rules of procedure will be performed by the organisers.

5.2 Derogations

The organisers will be entitled to derogate from the rules of procedure where appropriate.

5.3 Complaints

Any complaints arising during the competition should be directed to the organisers, who will be responsible for resolving them fairly.

6. OTHER

You will find information regarding the processing of personal data of participants, judges and coaches on the Website.