

Debates

Judging Package

Dear Judges,

I would like to thank you in the name of the Executive Team of MEC 2013 for participating as judges this year in the event. With your involvement, you increase the value of the event significantly by providing participants with experience and feedback in their performance. Also, by connecting with them you can share your experience in industry to help them grow as better engineering and better professionals. I hope that this experience is also enjoyable for you and you find interesting way in connecting with the top talent of our faculty.

This year, we are providing better venues in which you can connect to the participants and get to know them better. Your involvement as judges will give you a first hand exposure to their skills and talents. Later, you will be able to evaluate and select the top performers, who will represent McGill University at the Quebec Engineering Competition. Ultimately, you will be able to participate in a networking event with the winners of the competition, other fellow industry leaders and the organizers of the event.

You will be able to find enclosed in this document all the information regarding the competition, including the theme of the case, the details regarding the context of the situation and the evaluation criteria. Thanks again for your unconditional support to the McGill Engineering Competition 2013. We hope that we will be able to collaborate in the future.

Yours Sincerely,

**Carlos Marin Capriles**

*President*

**Engineering Undergraduate Society of McGill University**

**Introduction**

**Goal**

The goal is for the participants to apply analytical techniques in order to present a reasoned point of view on a previously undisclosed subject with minimal preparation. The purpose of this event is to assess the participants' ability to convey ideas and formulate arguments. The rules normally used in debate competitions are modified and relaxed to allow students without formal debate experience to participate

**Teams**

Each team is made up of 2 engineering students.

**Competition format**

The competition format will be of a double elimination format.

**Preparation elements**

A coin toss is done. The winning team chooses the party that it wants to debate for: being for, or being against.

**Subject of resolution**

The organizing committee will decide on the resolutions.

Following the choice of the sides, the resolution is revealed.

Resolutions do not include truisms (truths of evidence) and avoid the use of words such as absolute nature "all," "everyone" and "always."

**Deliberation**

Teams have ten minutes of isolation, following the revelation of the resolution, to prepare for the debate.

**Debate**

The order of speakers and the time allowed are :

1. First “for” speaker: 5 minute,

1. First “against” speaker: 5 minutes,
2. Second speaker “for”: 5 minutes,
3. Second “against” speaker: 5 minutes,
4. Conclusion by the first “against” speaker: 2 minutes,
5. Conclusion by the first “for” speaker: 2 minutes.

A speaker may request a grace period of 15 seconds. To do this, he or his colleague must hit hard on the table. If requested, the speaker is required to use this time for fear of being penalized.

**“For” camp**

**Role**

* The “for” camp will present an initial set of ideas that they must defend.
* **T**he “for” camp can redefine the resolution for the debate to be focused on a single major issue. However, the camp must not convert the resolution into a truism or redefine it in a way that gives the resolution a meaning other than what it has been previously given.
* The “for” camp may use one of two strategies outlined below.
* The “for” camp has the burden of proof, this party must therefore convince the judges to resolve beyond a reasonable doubt the resolution.

**Strategies for the « for » camp**

1. Case of principle

In a case of principle, the proposal contains a principle and an affirmation. The principle is a general statement that is debatable and based on facts, experience or morality. The statement is the application of a principle to a particular situation in relation to the resolution. The statement should talk about an important issue and can be a confirmation of the resolution.

**Ex.1:** Resolution: “Engineers must receive a solid general training.” / Proposed affirmation:" Engineering students should take more complementary studies”.

**Ex.2:** Resolution: "Canadians benefit from the free health care system." / Proposed affirmation: "We should discourage people from going to the doctor unless necessary."

1. Plan Case

In the Plan Case, the proposal identifies a principle and affirmation. Once this is done, a plan is presented to develop the statement and change the status quo. It should identify the need for change and how the plan will facilitate this change.

The case plan is most effective when the principle and affirmation are almost indisputable. In the case of plan, it is important that the plan does not become too specific.

**Ex.1:** Resolution: "Engineers must receive a solid general training "/ Proposed affirmation:" We should require students to follow a program of general education for two years before they can enrol in an engineering program "

**Ex.2:** Resolution: "Canadians benefit from the system of free health care" / Proposed affirmation: "We need people to be charged every time they visit a doctor"

**Ex.3:** Resolution: "Waste management should be more strict" / Proposed affirmation: "Waste management should be more strict, therefore we propose that any home that produces more than a certain amount of waste should pay a heavy fine".

**Speaker roles**

1. First speaker

The first “for” speaker must describe the resolution, clearly state the principle and the affirmation and then clarify any definition. If a plan case is submitted, the whole plan should be summarized in the speech of the first speaker. Finally, the first speaker must initiate the argument for the statement or plan.

1. Second speaker

The second speaker of the proposal continues the argument of the first speaker and reaffirms concepts attacked by the opposition. Other parts of their plan cannot be presented and the terms of the resolution cannot be redefined, however, new arguments may be presented as new evidence.

**“Against” camp**

**Role**

* It is the duty of the “against” camp to convince the judges that the opinions of the “for” camp are wrong.
* If the case presented by the proposal is a truism or requires specific knowledge it order to be debated, the opposition can then complain to the judges with a "point of process" at the end of the first speech of the “for” team. If the point of order is accepted, the “against” camp must override the resolution and redefine it in a questionable way.
* If the “for” camp presents a case of principle, the “against” team must oppose and attack the principle.
* If the proposal presents a case plan, the opposition can attack the principle, the assertion or argument of the plan. The opposition can also show how the plan will not work or identify adverse effects it would create. Finally, the opposition may propose another plan that would be more effective than the original plan. Only the first speaker of the “against” team may introduce other plans.

**Debate elements**

**Conclusion**

* The conclusions should summarize the most important elements in a concise and convincing. New arguments or facts should not be presented unless they are in direct rebuttal to what has already been discussed.
* Questions are another way to refute arguments. They can address deficiencies in ideas as they emerge.
* The speaker who has the floor has the authority to accept or reject any questions. The adversary who wishes to ask a question indicates his desire simply rising from his seat.
* If the speaker does not want to accept the question, he may show it by using his hand, or saying "No, thank you". If this occurs, the adversary must sit.
* If the speaker that has he floor is willing to answer the question, the opponent must ask it in less than fifteen seconds.
* Both team members can participate by answering the question. The time is stopped while the question is asked, but the speaker of the floor answers on his own time. Each speaker must accept at least one question during his speech if the opponent tries honestly to ask a question. Three attempts to ask a question is an honest attempt. If a speaker has already twice refused, the debate president will indicate that the speaker must take the question and answer it.
* Questions will not be permitted during the first or last minute of a speech or for the conclusions.

**Interjections**

* Sometimes the speaker contradicts himself or makes absurd assumptions. An interjection, at this time, will report the error and be added to the debate.
* Interjections are acceptable if they are short, well-led and preferably witty. If excess interjection disturbs the audience, the President may intervene.

**Point of procedure**

* If one team believes a rule has been violated, it shall immediately notify the President by standing up and saying, "Point of procedure." The President will then order the stopping of time and ask the speaker to rise and explain the procedural point. The team will then proceed to explain how the debate rules were not followed. Finally, the President will decide the point by saying: "Point accepted" or "Point rejected". The decision shall be final.
* If it seems obvious that the Presidents’ decision is wrong, the team should not argue with him, but depend on judges to rectify the error. The time required to question and settle the matter is not part of the time allotted to the team in this debate

**Officials**

**President**

* The President of the debate ensures that the rules of the debate are respected. It gives the right to speak (by presenting the speaker) and establishes the time limits. The President determines the outcome of the "points of procedures" provided by the speakers. The decisions of the President are final. Offensive remarks against the made decisions will not be tolerated.

**Time keeper**

* The timekeeper will use hand signals to provide time feedback to the debaters:
  + When 30 seconds have elapsed, the timekeeper will lift and open his hand to show that is now possible to ask questions.
  + When 1 minute has elapsed, the timer will raise his index finger to show that one minute is remaining for the debate.
  + When 30 seconds remain, the timekeeper will raise a fist to show the end of the question period.
  + When only 10 seconds remain for the debate, the timekeeper will raise his arm at an angle of 90 degrees and gradually lower it during the 10 seconds, so as to bring it to the horizontal (like a needle in a dial). If a debater bangs on the table during these 10 seconds (also called "grace period"), the timekeeper will lower arms, wait until the end of 10 seconds and begin a countdown of another 10 seconds, this time without the possibility of expanding this time.
* If a question is asked in the first or last minute of a speech, the timekeeper will inform the President who will then refuse the question immediately, as questions are not permitted during these parts of the speeches.

**Judges**

* An odd number of judges are asked for each debate. Without consulting the other judges, and in silence, each judge will vote for the winning team according to their own judgement. The vote will be done on paper, and the President will tally the votes. The team that will have accumulated the most votes will win the debate.
* Judges should focus only on what was said and the effectiveness of the presentation. In the end, they should be able to determine which party was able, with decorum, to better defend its position by properly using the rules of debate. They must also consider the ability of debaters to meet the objectives of their respective positions (for or against).