



network of international
business schools

WORLDWIDE CASE COMPETITION

Official Rules and Guidelines

Updated November 2023

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The following rules and guidelines for the Network of International Business Schools (NIBS) Worldwide Case Competition, hereinafter referred to as “the Competition”, are intended to ensure fairness to all participating teams. The organizers and judges of the Competition, as selected by the host institution, will strictly enforce Competition rules. Any interpretation of these rules that may arise during the Competition will be solely the responsibility of the organizers. Their decisions will be final.

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Student Eligibility

The Competition is open to any student registered for the duration of the Competition in an undergraduate (bachelor level or equivalent) business program (commerce, administration, management, etc.) at any member institution of the Network of International Business Schools or through special invitation made by the host institution and the NIBS Board. To be eligible, a student must not have completed their degree requirements by the time the Championship Round is held.

Students on exchange at a NIBS member institution for the entire academic year may compete for that member institution, provided they meet other eligibility requirements.

Individuals who have previously advanced to the *Championship Round* may not enter the Competition again. A student who has participated in the Qualifying Round, but NOT advanced to the Championship Round, remains eligible to compete.

1.2 Team Composition

Each NIBS member institution may enter one team in the Qualifying Round. A team consists of four eligible students.

1.3 Team Coach

A coach is an individual assigned by a participating institution to oversee the preparation and training of their team for the Competition. Coaches are typically faculty members at the participating institution. Each team should have at least one coach, and it is expected that one or more coaches will accompany the team to Championship Round of the Competition if they are among the qualifiers.

1.4 Team Liaison

One faculty or staff member from each member institution should be designated as official liaison. This person is usually but not necessarily the team coach. They are responsible for administering the Qualifying Round at the team's home institution (see section 2.3) and communicating with the Competition hosts on behalf of the team.

1.5 Registration Fee (Qualifying Round)

Each member institution wishing to enter a team in the Qualifying Round, except for the current year's host school, must pay the **€250** registration fee by the specified deadline. This date is generally approximately 1 to 2 weeks prior to the opening of the Qualifying Round.

1.6 Qualifying for the Championship Round

The host institution and its designated organizers are responsible for evaluating the Qualifying Round entrants and selecting the Championship Round teams. All teams, including those with guaranteed spots in the Championship Round, must participate in the Qualifying Round so that teams can be ranked (1 to 16).

Teams from both the current and prior year's host schools receive an automatic bye into the Championship Round. Invitations to fill the remaining 14 spots are based primarily on performance in the Qualifying Round, with consideration given to geographic diversity. Specifically, the Championship Round will generally include no more than four teams from any single country, and there should be no large disparity between the numbers of Championship Round teams from any particular geographic region. This mix is discussed with the NIBS Board before the finalists are announced.

To ensure that the competition remains accessible to all NIBS member institutions and enriched by diverse perspectives, one spot in the Championship Round is reserved for a “new entrant.” A new entrant is a team that has not previously advanced to the Championship Round of the Competition.

If fewer than 16 teams participate in the Qualifying Round, only 12 teams will participate in the Championship Round. In that case, the top 10 teams from the Qualifying Round will be invited to compete in the Championship Round, along with a team from the host institution and the previous year’s host. In order to be ranked (1 to 12), all teams—including the host and the previous year’s host—must participate in the Qualifying Round. If the Championship Round has only 12 participating teams, hereinafter “16 teams” should be read as “12 teams.”

1.7 Participant Fee (Championship Round)

Teams that qualify for the Championship Round must pay an additional participant fee of **€750** by the deadline specified by the host school or forfeit their spot in the competition. (This deadline is generally scheduled sometime in the first two weeks of January to accommodate New Year academic breaks.) Payment of this amount entitles a team to send four team members and one coach to the Championship Round. If desired, teams may send additional coaches at a cost of **€200** per person.

1.8 Team Changes

Any changes in team composition between the end of the Qualifying Round and the start of the Championship Round must be approved by the NIBS Board. Substitution is only allowed under *very exceptional circumstances*. These must be explained in a written letter to the NIBS Board, signed by the dean of the participating university. No more than one team member can be replaced.

1.9 Hosting the Championship Round

The NIBS Board is responsible for selecting the host institution for the following year’s Competition. Bids from all interested institutions are considered. To preserve the diverse and global nature of the Competition, the same institution is generally not permitted to host the championships for more than two consecutive years. The NIBS Board will provide a protocol manual to assist host institutions with the planning process.

1.10 Language

All case analysis reports and presentations must be in English.

2. QUALIFYING ROUND: RULES AND GUIDELINES

2.1 Timeline of the Competition

Late October – Deadline to enter a team

NIBS member institutions wishing to enter the Qualifying Round must complete and return the registration form and submit the Registration Fee by this deadline.

Mid-November – Qualifying Round

Completed by teams at a time and date of their choosing during a two-week window. Teams must arrange their start time with the host institution. They have nine (9) hours to upload their solution after downloading the case. Time permitted for actual case analysis is eight (8) hours.

Early December – Championship Round teams announced

Host institution announces names of the 16 schools that will advance to the Championship Round, along with the names of the individual team members.

Early January – Deadline to pay the Participant fee

NIBS member institutions whose teams have advanced to the Championship Round must submit the applicable Participant Fee by this date.

February or March – Championship Round

Takes place over a six-day period, normally from Sunday to Friday during a break week at the host school. This phase of the competition consists of an opening ceremony, group matches, Semi-Final matches, a social/cultural day, a Championship Final, and a gala.

2.2 Materials for Qualifying Round of the Competition

The following materials should be provided to the team during the Qualifying Round:

- Four printed copies of the case;
- A preparation room with blackboards, white boards, or flip chart;
- Paper, pencils, and pens, and;
- Two blank formatted memory sticks.

Teams may bring up to four personal computers into the preparation room; these should be equipped with word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software. Teams are permitted to access information stored on the hard drive of their computers, along with any physical media (e.g., textbooks, dictionaries, English grammar texts, etc.) they bring with them. Teams may NOT access the Internet or artificial intelligence agents (e.g., ChatGPT) or use any other electronic devices (e.g., tablets, mobile phones, etc.) during the case preparation period. To minimize opportunities for rule violation, all Internet-enabled equipment (apart from the four computers) should be collected from team members and retained until case preparation is complete.

2.3 Responsibilities of the Team Liaison

The team liaison will normally arrange the time and location for their team's Qualifying Round case preparation. They are also responsible for downloading and printing copies of the Qualifying Round case and uploading the team's completed case analysis report within the prescribed period.

As the designated agent of NIBS, the team liaison bears primary responsibility for preserving the integrity of the Competition at their institution for the duration of the Qualifying Round. This includes, but is not limited to, compliance with the time limit and all other Competition rules. In particular, no one other than the liaison should see the case before the preparation period begins and no one—including the liaison—should discuss the case with the team until the preparation period is over and the case analysis has been collected. The team liaison should collect Internet-enabled devices from team members and retain them until the case solution has been submitted.

2.4 Time Limit

Each team has a maximum of eight (8) hours to review the Qualifying Round case and prepare their case analysis report. This is a continuous period; any breaks taken by the team will count toward the eight-hour allowance.

Once the Qualifying Round case has been downloaded by the liaison, they will have up to nine (9) hours to upload the team's completed case analysis report. The intent of the extra hour is to provide sufficient time to print copies of the case for the team before the start of the preparation period and to verify receipt of a completed case analysis report with appropriate author identification (see section 2.5) prior to upload.

2.5 Case Analysis Report

The case analysis report should be submitted as a *Microsoft Word* file to facilitate verification of the word count. Text should be double-spaced using Calibri 11-point font; no handwritten material of any sort will be accepted. A margin of 1 inch (2.54 cm) should surround the text.

The report should include a title page, specifying the name of the academic institution and the individual team members. Since this information will be removed before the report is evaluated by judges, it should not appear anywhere else in the report (i.e., headers and footers should contain no identifying information).

The main body of the report—i.e., all content appearing after the title page and before the appendices (including headers)—must be no longer than 1,500 words. To facilitate compliance with this length restriction, teams should provide a word count at the beginning of the document. *This word count will be checked carefully by competition organizers.*

The report may also include a maximum of five (5) pages of appendices, the purpose of which is to provide support for the assertions and conclusions expressed in the body of the report. This content is separate from the main text and will *not* count toward the word limit. Appendices should be numbered, titled, and appropriately referenced within the body of the report. Although teams may use this space as they see fit, appendices in case analysis reports commonly include elements such as:

- Financial statements
- Analytical models
- Diagrams / illustrations
- Itemization / categorization of key information
- Implementation timeline

As in all business writing, appendices should be succinct, well laid out, and professionally presented. Teams should avoid the temptation to cram excessive content into these pages or employ overly small type. In addition, *appendices should not be viewed as an opportunity to circumvent the length restriction on the main body of the report*; any effort to do so will be poorly received by the judges.

Both the 1,500-word body text limit and 5-page appendix limit will be strictly enforced. *Any team exceeding either of these limits will be summarily disqualified.*

2.6 Judging

Each case analysis report will be assigned an identification number after its title page is removed. Three judges will evaluate all case analyses independently and use the criteria set by NIBS. NIBS will provide the host with the criteria and feedback forms. The judges' scores will be added and the teams ranked.

The top 14 teams will be invited to compete in the Championship Round, taking into account geographic considerations and the spot that is reserved for a new entrant (see section 1.6). The host team and the previous year's host receive a bye into the Championship Round.

NOTE: Teams will only be informed whether they have qualified for the Championship Round. The ranking will not be revealed until the draw to assign teams to groups for the Championship Round (see section 3.1.1).

2.6.1 Feedback

The host school will send the judges' evaluation form for each team to the team advisor. All teams will receive a written assessment of their submission, with particular care taken to provide high-quality feedback to teams that did not qualify. The host school will make the four highest-scoring case solutions available (with all author identification removed), *after* the Championship Round of the Competition is complete.

3. CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND: RULES AND GUIDELINES

Based on the Qualifying Round, 16 teams (including the host team and the previous host team) will be invited to compete in the Championship Round. Full details regarding the Championship Round schedule and any necessary arrangements will be provided by the host school.

Teams selected for the Championship Round should keep the following in mind:

- It is *extremely important* to obtain appropriate travel documents for all four team members as soon as the team has been chosen to participate in the Championship Round of the Competition.
- No extra person, either from the host institution or any other potential volunteer, will be allowed to join a team if the team arrives with only three (3) team members; however, the team will be allowed to participate with three team members.
- During the Competition, if a team member becomes ill and is unable to participate, the team will be allowed to participate with three team members.
- If a team cancels within a reasonable time frame, then the first team on the list of those that did not qualify for the Championship Round of the Competition (i.e., the team ranked 17th) will be invited to participate. If this team elects not to participate, the host team may ask the next-highest-ranked team from those who participated in the Qualifying Round (i.e., the team ranked 18th), and so on.
- If a team cancels its participation in the finals of the Competition at the last minute (i.e., within a time frame that makes it impractical for the host school to invite another team), the Competition will be modified to allow for the participation of only 15 teams. In this case, the competition schedule will remain the same and any teams that would have played against the missing opponent will present to the judges and be awarded a point total (on a scale of 1 to 11) that reflects the quality of their presentation.

3.1 Championship Round Structure

3.1.1 Group (Round Robin) Matches – Days 1 to 3

A series of round robin matches will be played in four groups of four teams each; during this phase, each team will compete head-to-head with the three other teams in the same group.

Composition of the groups will be determined using the rankings established in the Qualifying Round, in the following manner:

Teams ranked 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be in Category A;
Teams ranked 5, 6, 7 and 8 will be in Category B;
Teams ranked 9, 10, 11 and 12 will be in Category C;
Teams ranked 13, 14, 15 and 16 will be in Category D.

Every group in the Championship Round will have one team from Category A, one team from Category B, one team from Category C and one team from Category D.

First group match: Category D Team vs. Category A Team; Category B Team vs. Category C Team
Second group match: Category C Team vs. Category D Team; Category B Team vs. Category A Team
Third group match: Category B Team vs. Category D Team; Category A Team vs. Category C Team

A random draw will be held in order to assign teams to groups. All teams in the Championship Round will take part in a draw at the Opening Ceremony held prior to the first round of matches. In this draw, teams in Category A will be given a NEW number between 1 and 4, in Category B a NEW number between 5 and 8, in Category C a NEW number between 9 and 12, and in Category D a new number between 13 and 16.

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D
1, 5, 9, 13	2, 6, 10, 14	3, 7, 11, 15	4, 8, 12, 16
Round 1 – 4-hour case			
Team 13 vs. 1	Team 14 vs. 2	Team 15 vs. 3	Team 16 vs. 4
Team 5 vs. 9	Team 6 vs. 10	Team 7 vs. 11	Team 8 vs. 12
Round 2 – 4-hour case			
Team 9 vs. 13	Team 10 vs. 14	Team 11 vs. 15	Team 12 vs. 16
Team 5 vs. 1	Team 6 vs. 2	Team 7 vs. 3	Team 8 vs. 4
Round 3 – 3-hour case			
Team 5 vs. 13	Team 6 vs. 14	Team 7 vs. 15	Team 8 vs. 16
Team 1 vs. 9	Team 2 vs. 10	Team 3 vs. 11	Team 4 vs. 12

Following the three group (round-robin) matches, each team’s scores will be aggregated and the total used to rank the four teams in the group; the top two teams in each group will advance to the Semi-Final round. If there is a tie in the aggregated scores of teams, the team that won in head-to-head competition against the other tied team will be ranked higher.

NOTE: In the event of a Competition consisting of only 12 teams, three groups of four will be formed. The winner and second-place finisher in each group will qualify for the Semi-Finals, along with the two third-place finishers with the highest point totals. If all three third-place finishers have identical point totals, the ranking will be based on which team had the highest score on the third day. If the teams are still level, the teams will draw lots with the winner progressing.

3.1.2 Semi-Final & Championship Final (Playoff) Matches

Semi Finals: 3-hour case (head-to-head matches)

- Match 1: 1st Place Team from Group A vs. 2nd Place Team from Group B.
- Match 2: 1st Place Team from Group B vs. 2nd Place Team from Group A.
- Match 3: 1st Place Team from Group C vs. 2nd Place Team from Group D.
- Match 4: 1st Place Team from Group D vs. 2nd Place Team from Group C.

Semi Finals, in case of 12 teams:

- Match 1: 1st Place Team from Group A vs. 3rd Place Team from Group B or C (point total + random draw used).
- Match 2: 1st Place Team from Group B vs. 3rd Place Team from Group A or C (point total + random draw used).
- Match 3: 1st Place Team from Group C vs. 2nd Place Team from Group A.
- Match 4: 2nd Place Team from Group B plays 2nd Place Team from Group C.

Championship Final: Friday, 6-hour case, (teams ranked relative to one another)

- Presentation 1: Winner of Match 1
- Presentation 2: Winner of Match 2
- Presentation 3: Winner of Match 3
- Presentation 4: Winner of Match 4

3.1.3 Presentation Schedule

Competing “head-to-head” means that a pair of teams presents the same case to the same panel of judges and are scored based on their performance relative to each other (see section 6). The start times for the preparation and presentation phases for each team should be scheduled so that the two teams can present their completed analysis to the same judging panel immediately upon completing their case preparation, one after the other.

Where possible, start times for Competition matches will be “staggered” (i.e., an early wave of matches, followed by a late wave of matches) so participants can learn from watching other teams. In the group (i.e., round-robin) matches, each team will present first at least once, and second at least once.

First-time competitors should take careful note of the recorded presentations on the NIBS website; these are matches from previous NIBS Worldwide Case Competitions and provide an exemplar to illustrate expectations.

3.2 Team Ambassador

Each team will be assigned a team ambassador (also known as a “buddy”). The ambassador’s task is to assist the team, serving as the primary contact between the team and the Competition organizers. When the team is preparing its case solution, the team ambassador will serve as a runner, replenishing supplies (e.g., water, paper) and resolving issues as needed. No communication is permitted between team members and anyone except their team ambassador from the beginning of the preparation time to the time of presentation. *This specifically and explicitly includes team coaches.*

3.3 Case Preparation

3.3.1 Preparation Room

A preparation room will be provided to each team and will be available to them at least 15 minutes before the case preparation period. Every effort will be made to ensure that teams have the same preparation room for the duration of the Competition. The following materials will be provided in each room:

- Four printed copies of the case;
- Blackboard(s), whiteboard(s), or flip chart;
- Paper, pencils, and pens, and;
- Two blank formatted memory sticks.

Teams are also permitted to bring their own keyboard and presentation clicker, if desired. However, to ensure that preparation rooms are as consistent as possible, teams are not permitted to use projectors or large monitors in the preparation room even if they are available.

Teams may bring up to four personal computers into the preparation room; these should be equipped with word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software. Teams are permitted to access information stored on the hard drive of their computers, along with any physical media (e.g., textbooks, dictionaries, English grammar texts, etc.) they bring with them.

Teams may NOT access the Internet or artificial intelligence agents (e.g., ChatGPT) or use any other electronic devices (e.g., tablets, mobile phones, etc.) during the case preparation period. Although a code of honour applies, wireless networks will be carefully monitored, and laptop computers may be inspected at any point to ensure compliance with this rule. Internet-enabled equipment, such as smartphones and tablets, will be collected from team members and retained until the team’s presentation is complete.

The organizers reserve the right to inspect the preparation room at any time.

3.3.2 Presentation Templates

Teams are permitted use of a PowerPoint file containing one or more ready-made presentation template(s). *These templates must be developed by members of the team;* commercially-sourced or other purchased templates are not permitted. Prior to the start of the Championship Round, teams will be asked to submit their template files to ensure compliance with this rule. Teams may also update their templates between matches. For this reason, template files are subject to human or electronic inspection at any point during the Competition.

3.3.3 Presentation Memory Stick

Teams must save their work on two presentation memory sticks *provided by the organizers*. At the end of the preparation time, the team ambassador will take one memory stick and use it to load the presentation file onto the presentation computer. Teams should also save a copy of their final presentation to the hard drive of the computer in their preparation room. This will serve as a backup for their presentation memory stick. The other memory stick is used for printing and as an extra backup.

3.3.4 Set-up Time

The set-up time is not optional.

Immediately prior to each round, team ambassadors will meet their team and accompany them to the preparation room. The Competition schedule allows for at least 15 minutes of set-up time before each preparation period is to begin. During this time, the team ambassador will ensure that the room is appropriately configured and supplied, that computer equipment is working properly, and that the team's template is consistent with competition rules. Teams are NOT permitted to begin working on the computers before the actual match starts. This also means that no "filling of templates" is allowed during set-up time.

The team ambassador will collect all mobile phones, tablets and other equipment with potential for Internet access from team members and will keep these devices with them until after the feedback session.

Cases will be made available to the coaches after the final team has gone into its preparation room.

3.3.5 Preparation Time

Preparation time varies, depending on the round of the competition:

Group (Round Robin) Matches

Round 1:	4 hours
Round 2:	4 hours
Round 3:	3 hours

Playoff Matches

Semi-Final:	3 hours
Final:	6 hours

In general, length and complexity of the cases will be commensurate with the amount of preparation time.

If a computer problem occurs during the preparation time, preparation will be suspended for the amount of time needed to solve the problem. The preparation time will then be extended for up to 30 minutes in order to compensate for any preparation time lost. In the event of a problem the team must immediately notify its team ambassador, who will determine whether a genuine problem exists, assist in resolving the problem and measure any time lost. In instances where the team ambassador does not find a legitimate problem with the computer (e.g., if a team accidentally deletes a file) no extra time will be granted.

The team ambassador will notify the team when 10 minutes of preparation time remains. The team should ensure that the presentation is saved on the presentation memory stick (provided by the host institution) within the preparation time allotted. The presentation will be printed following the preparation period and a copy given to each judge *after* the presentation is complete.

If there has been a delay in any of the preparation or presentation rooms (e.g., if the preceding team has experienced computer problems), this may extend the time teams must wait before they are allowed to enter the presentation room. While not desirable, such delays are considered part of the competition.

3.3.6 Maximum Number of PowerPoint Slides

The maximum number of slides permitted in a presentation is 30. This includes any slides retained by the presenting group for use in the question & answer session that follows the presentation.

3.3.7 Material Introduced from Outside the Case

No credit will be given by judges for a team introducing material (other than general background knowledge) not contained in the case study or permitted resources.

4. PRESENTATION

4.1 Presentation Room

A presentation room will be provided for the case analysis presentation. The room will be set up with:

- One computer with software, including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- One data projector
- Possibly a presentation clicker
- Possibly microphones
- Possibly a photographer / videographer recording the presentation

4.2 Presentation Time

Presentation time varies, depending on the round of the competition:

Group (Round Robin) Matches

Round 1:	20 minutes
Round 2:	20 minutes
Round 3:	15 minutes

Playoff Matches

Semi-Final:	15 minutes
Final:	15 minutes

4.3 Presentation Room Monitor

A monitor (also known as a “timekeeper”) will supervise each pair of case presentations (i.e., each match). The monitor will begin by asking members of the audience to switch off all mobile phones. They will then ask the team to enter the presentation room when it is available for the presentation. The monitor will let the team organize itself, which should not take more than three (3) minutes. When ready, they will introduce the presenting team by stating the name of the institution, let the judges introduce themselves by name, and motion for the presentation to begin. They will indicate to the presenting team when there are ten (10) minutes, five (5) minutes, three (3) minutes, and one (1) minute remaining in the presentation time. When the 20 minutes are up, the monitor will end the presentation whether or not the team has finished. It is imperative that the monitor sits where they can be seen by all team members.

4.4 Question & Answer Session

Following the completion of the formal presentation, the monitor will state the amount of time available for questions for the panel of judges. Generally, this will be 10 minutes but, if delays have been experienced, the Q & A time may be reduced. Teams may show new slides during the Q & A session provided they are relevant to questions asked. The team may not, however, continue the presentation. Furthermore, the total amount of slides may never exceed 30.

A five (5) minute, a three (3) and a one (1) minute warning will be given during the question & answer period. It is imperative that the monitor be visible to the judges during the Q & A period.

4.5 Attending and Recording Presentations

During all matches, recording of presentations (i.e., photographs, video recording, or audio recording) by anyone other than Competition organizers or the coach of the presenting team is strictly prohibited without explicit permission from the presenting team. The organizers reserve the right to record presentations for use in educational or promotional activities following the Competition.

During the group (round-robin) and Semi-Final matches, student teams are NOT permitted to view the presentation of their direct opponent in the head-to-head match. Coaches are free to attend presentations for any match in the round.

Championship Final presentations are open to all participants, including direct opponents.

5. JUDGING

5.1 Judge Selection

Judges are selected by the host institution and should represent different professional experiences and backgrounds. Ideally, each judging panel should contain representation from the business community, government leaders, and university faculty members. (In other words, not solely university faculty and staff.) Organizers are strongly encouraged to recruit former NIBS Case Competition participants to serve as judges.

Each judging panel normally consists of at least three judges. It is preferable to have five judges for the finals. The formation of the judging panels is the sole responsibility of the organizers and cannot be contested.

5.2 Judges' Training

The host institution will provide training for the judges. Important considerations for judges include:

- they must have a good understanding of the case itself;
- they should "play the role" assigned to them in the case; *
- the recommendation of the team must be viable;
- there may be very different ways of approaching the key issue in the case;
- there are different ways of solving the case (problem), NO "single" right answer;
- substance is more important than presentation;
- models are useful when they are appropriately applied, not simply mentioned;
- good feedback after the match is extremely important;
- feedback must clearly match the score—i.e., a bad score should be accompanied by suggestions for improvement, and a good score has to be based on several strong points;
- judges must remember that not all teams/team members have English as their mother tongue.

* In each round, organizers will assign judges to matches in such a way that each judging panel has an individual responsible for finance, another for marketing, etc. Judges should introduce themselves to presenting teams in accordance with their assigned role on the panel rather than their real-life position. Exceptions may occur in situations where the company featured in the case is represented on the judging panel.

5.3 Judges' Information Package

A Judges' Information Package will be distributed to judges at least two weeks in advance of the Competition. The Package should contain a copy of the case(s), a copy of the guidelines for case analysis, and a copy of the evaluation form / rubric to assist judges in their evaluation of the presentations. A brief discussion of the case method and the level of expectations of undergraduate students should also be included.

Hosts will generally organize one or more judges' training sessions approximately two weeks before the start of the Championship Round. This gives organizers an opportunity to explain the principles of case judging and allow the judges to practice. It is best to organize a complete "dry run", involving team ambassadors, presentation room monitors, etc.

NOTE: To ensure transparency and make expectations clear, the judges' guidelines and the evaluation form / rubric should also be distributed to the coaches of participating teams prior to the competition.

5.4 Judges' Briefing

Judges are briefed by a member of the host organizing team on the day of their participation in the Competition. This gives the organizers an opportunity to answer any questions, and to reinforce key messages from the judges' training session.

NOTE: The individual delivering the briefing *cannot* be the coach of the host student team.

5.5 Judges' Scoring

Judges should receive a printed copy of the presentation slides immediately following the presentation and Q&A, as they begin their deliberation. The deliberation period after every presentation is 10 minutes. After completing their second deliberation, judges have 5 minutes to decide the score and outcome of the match.

Judges should work to come to a consensus when evaluating teams, as opposed to each judge stating an individual score and then averaging these scores. To this end, it is recommended that, for the group (round-robin) matches, there should be three judges, and for the finals not more than five judges.

5.6 Judges' Feedback

Immediately after scoring the match, judges should give both oral and written feedback to the competing teams, one team at a time, for 10 minutes, in such a way that the teams understand the reasons why one team was judged to have been superior to the other. Teams are not permitted to hear the feedback of other teams. The completed feedback form used by the judges in their evaluation will be made available to each of the teams.

Immediately after the second team has received its feedback, the judges should invite the first team to return to the room. The match score should then be announced to both teams simultaneously.

The judge panels will submit a scoring form to the organizers. The scores will be posted publicly.

6. SCORING

After both teams have presented, the judges will determine a winner on an 11-point scale, i.e. the total of the points to both teams must be 11. Ties are not permitted, judges may use ½-point increments when scoring, and the widest margin allowed is 8 to 3 (i.e., the highest possible score is 8 and the lowest possible score is 3). The following will be used as a guide:

6 to 5	Extremely close match
6.5 to 4.5	Winning team somewhat better
7 to 4	Winning team clearly better
7.5 to 3.5	Winning team decisively better
8 to 3	Winning team extremely strong; opponent had major deficiencies

7. FINAL GROUP STANDINGS

After the three group matches are complete, each team's scores will be aggregated and the total used to rank the four teams in the group; top two teams in each group will advance to the Semi-Final round. In the event that there is a tie in the aggregated scores of teams, the ranking will be determined based on which team won in head-to-head Competition against the other tied team.

NOTE: In case of a Competition featuring 12 teams, three groups will be formed. The group winners and second-place finishers will qualify for the Semi-Finals, along with the two third-place teams with the highest aggregated score. In case of the same total number of points, the ranking will be determined based on which team had the highest score on the third day. In case of a tie in all tie-breakers, a random draw will be used to choose the team that advances.

8. SEMI FINALS AND FINAL

The Semi-Finals will have three (3) hours of preparation time and the Championship Final will have six (6) hours of preparation time. All other rules previously described for the group matches apply to the Semi-Finals and Championship Final. The semi-finalists and finalists will be allowed a maximum of 15 minutes for their presentation and the Q & A session will be 10 minutes. The winners of each of the four Semi-Final matches advance to the Championship Final.

9. AWARDS

The four presentations in the Championship Final will be ranked by judges based on the same evaluation criteria used in previous rounds. These rankings will be used to determine the order of finish in the competition. The first-place team in the Final match will be the NIBS Champions ('gold medallists'); second-place finishers 'silver medallists'; and third-place finishers 'bronze medallists'. The fourth-place team will be recognized as finalists, but will not receive medals. Recognition will also be given to the individuals or team judged to be:

- the best individual presenter(s) (determined by the competition organizers)
- the most inspiring coach (determined by the competition organizers)
- the most spirited team (voted on by teams)

The host will provide a trophy for the winner of the NIBS Worldwide Case Competition, and appropriate recognition to the winners of the other awards.

10. CASES

Every effort will be made to ensure that the cases used in the competition are recent and, ideally, unpublished. Cases will be of appropriate length to allow teams to complete their preparation within time. Recommended length are 9 to 12 pages (exclusive of appendices) for the Qualification Round case and 4-hour Championship Round cases, 6 to 8 pages (exclusive of appendices) for 3-hour Championship Round cases, and 13 to 16 pages for the case used in the 6-hour Championship Final. Overly short cases are problematic because they leave too much unknown, forcing students to make too many assumptions; overly lengthy cases could lead to very long reading times for non-native teams and thus less time for actual case solving.

11. PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF RULE VIOLATION

The organizers retain the right to disqualify any team from the Competition if the rules are not observed or if a team does not maintain a proper standard of conduct in the professional and collegial spirit of the Competition.

Any concerns or disputes regarding the implementation of these rules and/or any improper or disloyal behaviour must be brought to the immediate attention of the organizers. Please note that the decision of the organizers is final and not subject to review.

NIBS Board, November 2023