# NIBS Worldwide Case Competition

## 2026 Qualifying Round Instructions

## Qualifying Round Overview

Teams have 8 continuous hours to analyze a case, develop their solution, prepare their slides, and record a video presentation using Zoom or an equivalent platform (maximum 10 minutes). They then have one further hour to submit the recording and a matching PDF of their slides for evaluation. Finally, they attend a 12-minute question-and-answer session (Q&A), scheduled within 48 hours after the submission deadline.

| Stage | Requirement |
|---|---|
| Preparation | 8 continuous hours, including recording |
| Submission | Video up to 10 minutes and matching PDF of up to 25 slides |
| Upload | Complete within 1 further hour |
| Live Q&A | 12 minutes at an assigned appointment within 48 hours of the submission deadline |

## 1 | Preparation

- The faculty liaison (normally the coach) agrees, in advance, on a start time with NIBS. The liaison then releases the case to the team at the agreed-upon time. Teams must not see the case early.
- To facilitate Q&A scheduling across time zones, NIBS may offer a limited number of designated case-start windows. Exceptions may be approved in advance where necessary.
- The 8-hour time limit includes analysis, writing, slides, rehearsal, recording, and breaks. Equipment may be set up and tested beforehand.
- After 8 hours have elapsed, teams must stop all work on their submission and all recording. The liaison takes both final files. Video processing may finish during the upload hour; no content may change.
- Teams may use up to four personal computers equipped with word-processing, spreadsheet and presentation software, together with materials stored locally on those computers and physical reference materials they bring. Internet access is permitted only as required for authorized recording and submission. Teams may not use Internet research, generative AI or other AI agents, phones, tablets or other Internet-enabled devices, or receive outside help. The liaison may provide technical assistance but cannot assist with the solution.

## 2 | Submission

- **Presentation Video:** This should be recorded using Zoom or an equivalent platform. Maximum 10 minutes. Teams should then submit the MP4 file. The presentation file should consist of one continuous recording with no pauses, editing, or splicing. Teams may record multiple versions of their presentation, provided this is done within the 8 hours. Only the best version should be submitted for evaluation.
- Teams should use the following recording layout: large slides with presenter video alongside, taking care not to block content. Slides must be readable in full-screen laptop playback and audio clear. The presentation may contain a maximum of 25 slides, including title and closing slides. All four team members must present unless NIBS approves an exceptional absence.

- **Slide PDF:** Teams must submit exactly the slides shown in the presentation video, in the same order. The PDF must be completed within the 8 hours and contain no more than 25 slides. No extra slides, appendices or speaker notes are permitted.
- **Team identification:** Teams will be assigned a unique team number shortly after registration. To preserve impartiality as much as possible, teams should take care not to show institutional names or logos and must not identify their institution in introductions. Full anonymity cannot be guaranteed with video and live Q&A.

## 3 | Upload

- Both files in the submission—the Presentation Video recording (MP4) and the Slide Deck (PDF)—must be uploaded to the NIBS-designated file storage service no later than 9 hours after case release. The final hour is for processing, transfer and upload only. Due to firewall restrictions, teams based in China may be offered a different approved upload service.
- The team number should be used in both filenames, using the following format: Team017_Presentation.mp4 and Team017_Slides.pdf. Teams are responsible for confirming successful upload and retaining unchanged copies of both submitted files.
- The faculty liaison is responsible for ensuring and certifying completion within 8 hours and that submitted content was not changed afterward.

## 4 | Before and during Q&A

- Once the 8-hour preparation period ends, submitted work is final and may not be changed. Before the Q&A, team members may review the original case and submitted materials and are permitted to discuss or rehearse their responses within the team. They may not conduct new research or use AI tools or other outside assistance.
- From case release until completion of Q&A, teams may not receive coaching or other outside assistance concerning the case or their solution. Technical assistance remains permitted. Prior to the Q&A, teams and coaches must provide an honour declaration confirming compliance.
- NIBS will offer several Q&A session blocks to accommodate different time zones. Each team's Q&A will be scheduled no later than 48 hours after its 9-hour submission deadline. Liaisons will rank their preferred session blocks; NIBS will assign appointment times and send calendar invitations. Changes require advance approval.
- All four team members should join 5 minutes early and wait to be admitted. Exceptional absences, such as illness, require advance NIBS approval. The faculty liaison may help with connection problems only. Coaches and faculty liaisons may not attend the Q&A.
- The aim of the Q&A is to test the team's understanding, command and ability to defend the submitted work. Judges will request clarification, probe assumptions and test weaknesses in the solution.
- During Q&A, teams may consult the case and any of the materials submitted. They may not use new prepared materials. Team members must answer without outside help, including help from AI tools.
- Questions will be tailored to each solution, with comparable difficulty for all teams, and may be addressed to individual members. The Q&A will end after 12 minutes of questioning, excluding any pauses for technical problems.
- Sessions are private. Teams, coaches and liaisons must not share questions or session details with other teams until NIBS confirms that all Q&A sessions are complete.

## 5 | Judging

Presentations will be judged on the quality of the analysis, logic and support of the recommendations, completeness of the implementation plan, and effective communication. The PDF has no separate score.

NIBS is responsible for coordinating the judging panel and Q&A arrangements. For 2026, the NIBS Vice President will coordinate the judges. The same judging panel will review all submissions and conduct every Q&A session, and all members of the panel will participate in every Q&A. This common-panel requirement is intended to support consistent assessment and both actual and perceived fairness across teams. To make the schedule feasible, NIBS may use a relatively small panel of judges who can commit to the full Qualifying Round schedule. Judges will score each team independently after the Q&A, using evidence from the presentation video, presentation slides and answers to questions. Individual judge scores will be aggregated to establish an initial ranking. After all teams have been assessed, the panel will review the overall ranking, especially ties, teams near the qualification threshold and substantial differences among judges' assessments. Judges may revise their own scores where discussion identifies inconsistent application of the rubric; scores will not be negotiated collectively and no single consensus score will be assigned. Scoring weights are as follows:

| Criterion | Points |
|---|---|
| Issue identification | 5 |
| Analysis | 15 |
| Alternatives and recommendation | 15 |
| Implementation | 15 |
| Innovation and creative thinking | 5 |
| Presentation | 15 |
| Q&A | 30 |
| **TOTAL** | **100** |

The accompanying scoring sheet explains each criterion. The role of the Q&A is to assess the team's understanding, command and ability to defend the submitted work. Answers that reveal substantive errors or unsupported reasoning may also inform the relevant content scores. Suspected rule breaches will be referred to NIBS separately; weak Q&A performance alone does not establish misconduct.

## 6 | Technical readiness

- Teams are responsible for equipment and connectivity. Before completing the Qualifying Round, teams should make and upload a practice recording with non-competition content.
- Prior to submitting their presentation recording for evaluation, teams should check audio and video quality. After submitting, they are responsible for ensuring that the upload was successful.
- Prior to completing the Q&A, teams should test network access from the location(s) they plan to use.
- The faculty liaison is responsible for confirming readiness by the NIBS deadline.
- NIBS will supply Zoom setup instructions. Teams using an equivalent platform must meet the same recording requirements and test their arrangement in advance.

## 7 | Limits and technical failures

- Exceeding length restrictions does not disqualify a team. Instead, judges will assess only the first 10 minutes of the Presentation Video. Slides shown after the 10-minute mark of the presentation will not be assessed even if they are included in the PDF.
- The 25-slide maximum applies to both the video and slide PDF. Judges will assess only the first 25 slides, even if more are presented within the 10-minute video limit.
- Upload or file problems should be reported promptly to NIBS, before the deadline where possible. Teams should retain the unchanged files and error evidence. NIBS may allow transfer of those files; this does not permit further work or automatically extend time.
- In the event of a Q&A connection failure, the chair will pause the clock. NIBS may reconnect or reschedule the remaining time. Late submissions or missed Q&A without an accepted reason may result in disqualification; this will be decided by NIBS.