

ETHICS BOWL PROCEDURE

THE PRESENTATION: 6 minutes – 15 points

Team A confers for two minutes and then presents its analysis of the case.

NOTE: New policy - Both teams can confer quietly and take notes on provided scrap paper before the presentation, commentary and response.

During a Presentation, a team presents its central argument. It should have 3 qualities:

- It should clearly and systematically address the question the moderator asks
- It should identify and discuss the central moral dimensions of the case
- It should indicate awareness and thoughtful consideration of different viewpoints, including those that come to a different conclusion. Try to empathize with positions not your own; get inside them, understand why others may hold them.

Who speaks during the presentation?

In the past, there has been some concern that teams were penalized or rewarded depending on whether one person speaks or everyone contributes. We understand that each team has its own process:

- Some divide up the cases so that individuals are responsible for a certain number of cases; as a result one person would present. Other teams ask that each member of the team become responsible for a different aspect of all the cases; as a result, all team members would speak.
- Either of these strategies (or variations) is feasible and scoring is neutral on this issue. However, judges do not know which approach a team will take unless they are informed. Therefore, to dispel any preconceptions that a judge may harbor, we strongly urge that a team outline its presentation when it begins – that is, the team should explain who will be discussing which aspect(s) of the case and why. This way, a judge will know what kind of presentation to expect.
- Judges know that they should neither penalize nor reward a team for using either approach: both are welcome.
- Additionally, because an ethics bowl encourages collaboration, team members are encouraged to remain seated rather than stand during a match.

THE COMMENTARY: 4 minutes – 10 points

Team B confers for one minute and then offers a Commentary on Team A's presentation.

When team members comment, they should think of themselves as thoughtful, critical listeners. Their goal is to point out the flaws in the presentation, to comment on its strengths, note what has been omitted or needs further development; all this is in the interest of making the presentation of the case stronger.

Although teams are allowed to and should pose questions during Commentary, the first team is under no obligation to answer any or all questions raised by the second team (or vice versa). The presenting team, however, should be able to answer the most crucial or morally pressing question or two (in the event that there are more than two questions).

- Teams are expected to ask insightful questions that target the primary position, key implications, or unaddressed central issues.
- When scoring Commentary, judges will consider the questions raised by the opposing team and whether the questions addressed truly substantive issues—both in relation to the presentation and the moderator’s question.
- A “question shower” or “spit-fire questioning,” during which a team rapidly asks many questions in an attempt to overwhelm or dominate the other team, is inconsistent with the aims of Ethics Bowl, and will not merit a high score.

THE RESPONSE: 4 minutes, 5 points

Team A confers for one minute. Team A responds to the points raised by Team B’s Commentary. This is not a dialogue: only Team A speaks during this portion.

JUDGES’ QUESTIONS: 10 minutes, 20 points

Each judge can (but doesn’t have to) ask one question of the team – not an individual member of the team, and if there’s time, a follow-up.

RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE: 10 points

Teams will be judged on their demeanor – their ability to disagree without being disagreeable, to argue a point without becoming combative or adversarial, to main civil discourse throughout the rounds.