

## Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl Judges' Scoring Guidelines

### Presenting Team's initial presentation (30 total points)

1. Was the presentation clear and systematic, and did the team answer the moderator's question? Regardless of whether or not you agree with the conclusion, did the team give a coherent argument in a clear and succinct manner?

1-2 = Incoherent presentation  
3-4 = Serious logical problems in the argument (poor)  
5-6 = Hard to follow the argument (passable)  
7-8 = Reasonably clear and systematic  
9 = Crystal clear presentation  
10 = Exceptional

2. Did the team's presentation clearly identify and thoroughly discuss the central moral dimensions of the case?

1-2 = Failure to cover any relevant moral dimensions  
3-4 = Serious missing or underdeveloped dimensions (poor)  
5-6 = Some significant dimensions are missing or poorly covered (passable)  
7-8 = Most dimensions are present and well developed  
9 = All dimensions present and clarified appropriately  
10 = Exceptional

3. Did the team's presentation indicate both awareness and thoughtful consideration of different viewpoints, including especially those that would loom large in the reasoning of individuals who disagree with team's position?

1-2 = Minimal awareness of different viewpoints or failed to consider positions that would serve to rebut their own.  
3-4 = Minimal consideration of different viewpoints or minimal consideration of positions that would serve to rebut their own.... (poor)  
5-6 = Underdeveloped discussion of different viewpoints.... (passable)  
7-8 = Solid analysis and discussion of different viewpoints, including careful attention especially to those that would loom large....  
9 = Insightful analysis and discussion of different viewpoints, including full and careful attention especially to those that would loom large....  
10 = Exceptional

### Opposing Team's Commentary (10 total points)

To what extent has the team effectively dealt with the presenting team's arguments?

1-2 = Failure to respond to presenting team  
3-4 = Weak or irrelevant response (poor)  
5-6 = Some points are made (passable)  
7-8 = Solid response to presenting team's points  
9 = Key points zeroed in on (crystal clear)  
10 = Exceptionally composed commentary

### Presenting Team's Response to Commentary (5 total points)

How did the team respond to the opposing team's commentary?

1 = Failure to respond to opposing team's commentary  
2 = Weak or irrelevant response (poor)  
3 = Some points are made (passable)  
4 = Solid response to commenting team's points  
5 = Key points zeroed in on (crystal clear)

### Presenting Team's Response to Judges' Questions (15 total points)

How did the team respond to the judges' questions?

1-2 = Failure to respond to judges  
3-5 = Weak or irrelevant response (poor)  
6-8 = Some points are made (passable)  
9-11 = Solid response to judge's points and/or question  
12-14 = Key points zeroed in on (crystal clear)  
15 = Exceptionally composed answers/responses

## **Research**

Successful presentations should include a clear and detailed understanding of the facts given in the case. Since cases often involve details that are not general knowledge, research will often be necessary. Students should be prepared to identify sources of facts gained through independent research. While research is helpful, even necessary as a learning tool, judges should focus predominantly on the quality of arguments presented.

## **Moral Theories**

Judges should be looking for good arguments that employ clear ethical principles. This does not require that teams put those arguments explicitly within some formal ethical theory. What really matters is that they grasp important ethical principle(s), and are able to clearly articulate and defend them well against critique. For example, if a team has a good argument about fairness they should be rewarded for this, whether they drape it in the clothing of Rawls' Veil of Ignorance or some other theory or just leave it in plain English. The above should not be interpreted to mean that teams should be discouraged from using ethical theory. Rather, if they do they should clearly explain the theory(ies) and not merely drop names (a really good argument based on such theories is possible).

## **Reasonable Disagreement**

The ethical case studies are designed to address controversial issues about which intelligent, thoughtful people can reasonably disagree. The scores of the teams, therefore, should be based on the quality of their arguments, not on whether or not they adopted one position rather than another. The team that makes the strongest argument should win the most points. Moral decisions are made case by case based on applying critical thought to difficult situations. When evaluating teams, judges should not let whether or not they agree with the team's conclusion influence their assessment.

## **Presentation Style**

The focus of the ethics bowl is on the arguments the students provide. This means that judges must evaluate, and only evaluate, a team on aspects of its presentation that relate directly to the three criteria identified on the judge's scoresheet. Judges may not consider in their scoring other aspects of the team's presentation (e.g. the voice quality of presenters, whether they maintain eye contact with the judges, etc.).

## **Posing Questions in the Commentary**

In their commentary (Rule 8), Team 2 may also pose questions to Team 1, but Team 1 is under no obligation to answer any or all of Team 2's questions. Team 1 should, however, be able to answer the most important question or two (in the event that there are more than two questions). When scoring team 2's commentary, judges should consider that questions raised during the commentary should address truly substantive issues both in relation to team 1's presentation and the moderator's question. A "question shower" in which Team 2 attempts to dominate Team 1's response to Team 2's commentary simply by posing a large laundry list of questions, should not merit a high score.

## **Scoring Note**

At the end of each round you should enter the following scores:

- a) The presenting team's presentation score,
- b) The responding team's commentary score,
- c) The presenting team's response to commentary score, and
- d) the presenting team's response to judges' questions score.

## **Spirit Points**

Spirit points reflect an assessment of the extent to which each team's presentation embodied the spirit of the ethics bowl competition (in particular with respect to civility). Give a score of 1-5 on the flipside of the judges' Scoresheet. Spirit Points are NOT factored in to a team's overall score, but are for feedback purposes only.