



GOLD COAST  
**DEBATING**

# Competition Rules & Procedures

Updated January 2026

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## INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMPETITION

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1. Secondary schools, or schools with a secondary department, are eligible to enter teams into the Gold Coast Debating competition.
2. It is recommended that a representative from the school becomes a member of the association, affording them privileges to vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
  - 2.1. Membership is obtained by completing the form available on the GCD website and paying the nominated fee.
  - 2.2. Membership fees are due by 31 January each year and membership lapses two months later if not paid.
3. Schools participate in the competition on the understanding that they will meet all the various obligations outlined in this document and any other Association publications.
  - 3.1. Ignorance of a rule is not an acceptable excuse for failure to comply.

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## ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

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4. All General Meetings of the Association are open to representatives from all secondary schools, with all schools strongly encouraged to have at least one representative at each meeting.
5. The **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** will occur before the beginning of the season, including at the end of the year prior, and a **General Meeting (GM)** may be called at any time during the year.
  - 5.1. The purposes of the **AGM** are:
    - 5.1.1. electing the management committee and other committees deemed necessary,
    - 5.1.2. formalising venues,
    - 5.1.3. making changes to rules and/or the organisational structure of the competitions,
    - 5.1.4. approving any expenditure.
  - 5.2. The purposes of a **GM** are:
    - 5.2.1. reviewing the competition,
    - 5.2.2. making proposals of changes to rules and/or the organisational structure of the competition.

6. The election of the management committee and the ratification of all changes to rules and/or the organisational structure of the competition can only be made by a motion carried by vote at the AGM.

- 6.1. A quorum must be formed for motions to be carried.

### **FORMING A QUORUM**

7. A quorum is formed when the number of members present reaches at least the number of management committee members, plus one.
8. If members choose to leave the AGM early, motions can still be made and carried out while the quorum is formed.
9. It is the duty of the Secretary to monitor numbers and notify the President if the quorum is lost.
10. Once a motion under quorum is carried it cannot be changed until the next AGM.

### **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

11. Members of the Management Committee may determine when and how often they need to meet to conduct association business, with a minimum of one meeting per competition year. Business conducted during these meetings may include, but is not limited to:
  - 11.1. to prepare for association meetings,
  - 11.2. to discuss arrangements, including topics and logistics,
  - 11.3. to discuss and review the year's competition,
  - 11.4. to discuss potential issues or problems,
  - 11.5. to bring new ideas regarding the competition to the group.

### **AGENDAS AND MINUTES**

12. Agendas for General Meetings will be distributed via email to members and School Debating Coordinators no later than the Friday preceding the meeting.
13. The agenda is written by the President and is based upon business arising from the previous meeting, Management Committee meetings, and / or regular items (such as the election of positions).
14. Any representative from any school involved in the competition can bring new items of discussion into the meeting in the New Business section.
15. Minutes for General and Management Committee meetings will be taken by the Secretary.
  - 15.1. Minutes will be checked by the President and, once confirmed as accurate, distributed via email to members and schools no later than the Monday following the meeting.
  - 15.2. Any discrepancy in the minutes should be raised to the President as soon as possible.

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## BOARD ROLES

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16. The roles of the Management Committee include, and are not limited to the following:

### **PRESIDENT**

17. Responsible for overseeing the Management Committee and maintaining the administrative and compliance aspects of the association:

- 17.1. oversees other committee members,
- 17.2. liaises with Bond University on sponsorship, Summer School and Grand Final,
- 17.3. liaises with external organisations,
- 17.4. deals with matter of incorporation and constitution,
- 17.5. organises and chairs management committee and general meetings,
- 17.6. supports venue coordinators.

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

18. Responsible for coordinating the competition:

- 18.1. determines viable competition dates,
- 18.2. trains and allocates adjudicators,
- 18.3. determines, in consultation with GCD Committee and members, competition guidelines.

### **TREASURER**

19. Responsible for treasury and records:

- 19.1. maintains database of volunteers, including bank details,
- 19.2. processes reimbursements and payments to adjudicators, venue hosts and management committee periodically,
- 19.3. maintains record of receipts,
- 19.4. produces and presents a treasurer's report at each AGM.

### **SECRETARY**

20. Responsible for governance and compliance:

- 20.1. Maintains database of members,
- 20.2. Ensures public liability insurance is maintained,
- 20.3. Monitor Blue Card status of adjudicators,
- 20.4. Creates and distributes meeting agendas and minutes.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

21. From time to time, members of the Management Committee will find themselves to have conflicts of interest, where they represent or are connected to schools involved in the competition.
  - 21.1. Where conflicts of interest are identified, Management Committee members will be excluded from discussions and votes to ensure fair resolution of issues.
  - 21.2. In a situation where all Management Committee members have identified conflicts of interest, external resolutions will be sought from members of the Association and other representatives, including Venue Coordinators and adjudicators.

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## COMPETITION STRUCTURE

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### COMPETITION INFORMATION

22. Each year, a prospectus will be forwarded to school outlining the dates, venues, topics and registration details for the season ahead.

### DIVISION OF COMPETITION

23. The competition is first divided by year levels:
  - 23.1. Years 8 and below may enter the *Junior* divisions.
  - 23.2. Years 10 and below may enter the *Intermediate* divisions.
  - 23.3. Years 12 and below may enter the *Open* divisions.
  - 23.4. A school may choose to combine year levels or choose to create teams of only one year level. For example, a team in *Intermediate* may consist of either a mix of Year 9 and Year 10 students, or only Year 9 or only Year 10.
24. The competition is further split into two divisions: A and B.
  - 24.1. *A Division* is for students with reasonable to extensive debating experience who are interested in a competitive and, therefore, more structured experience
  - 24.2. *B Division* is for teams *mostly* comprised of students with limited to no debating experience, or limited competence/strength across debating skills, who are interested in a more flexible development experience.
  - 24.3. **Schools must bear responsibility for entering teams into the appropriate division in accordance with the above clauses. If a team with extensive experience and strength is found competing in a B division, for example, they may be asked to change divisions or**

**face disqualification, at the discretion of the Management Committee.**

## **DEBATES**

25. All GCD competitions, except the Junior B Division, are conducted in two parts: a *Preliminary Series* and an elimination-based *Finals Series*.
26. Debating methods used within GCD competitions include both *prepared debates* (topics provided at a minimum of two weeks before the debate) and *short preparation debates* (topics given to teams 1 to 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  hours before the start of the debate).
  - 26.1. The JUNIOR A Preliminary Series consists of two *prepared debates* and two *short preparation debates* – with students having 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  hours to prepare their arguments. *Points of Information* are not permitted.
  - 26.2. The INTERMEDIATE B Preliminary Series consists of two *prepared debates* and two *short preparation debates* – with students having 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  hours to prepare their arguments. *Points of Information* are not permitted.
  - 26.3. The INTERMEDIATE A Preliminary Series consists of one *prepared debate* and three *short preparation debates* – with students having 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  hours to prepare their arguments. *Points of Information* are encouraged, but will be ignored for the purposes of scoring and adjudication – this is an opportunity for students to practice without penalty.
  - 26.4. The OPEN B Preliminary Series consists of one *prepared debates* and three *short preparation debates* – with students having 1 hour to prepare their arguments. Students are expected to use *Points of Information* and can be awarded bonus points for effective posing or handling. However, students are not penalised for poor handling or not offering POIs. Where additional points are to be awarded, a maximum of 2 additional points per team is allowed.
  - 26.5. The OPEN A Preliminary Series consists of four *short preparation debates* – with students having 1 hour to prepare their arguments. Students are expected to use *Points of Information* and can be awarded bonus points for effective posing or handling. However, students are not penalised for poor handling or not offering POIs. Where additional points are to be awarded, a maximum of 2 additional points per team is allowed.

## PROGRESSION TO FINALS SERIES

27. At the conclusion of the *Preliminary Series*, except for Junior B division, results are collated and the top 16 teams in each division will progress to the FINALS SERIES, as determined by number of wins.
  - 27.1. The GCD Committee may exercise discretion in filling the top 16 positions. For example, where more than 16 teams have achieved 3 or 4 wins, but fewer than 16 teams have achieved 4 wins, the committee shall determine how to distinguish between the teams on 3 wins. This may include scheduling additional '*Preliminary Finals*' debates.
  - 27.2. The *Finals Series* is run on an elimination basis, culminating in two teams in each division competing for the title of Gold Coast Debating Champion for the division.

## JUNIOR B COMPETITION STRUCTURE

28. The Junior B Division competition is structured differently to all other divisions to provide more experience in a less competitive environment for all participating teams in their foundation year.
  - 28.1. The JUNIOR B PRELIMINARY SERIES consists of three *prepared debates* and two *short preparation debates*, with students having 1¾ hours to prepare their arguments. *Points of Information* are not permitted.
  - 28.2. Teams on the highest number of wins, as determined by the GCD Committee upon reviewing the preliminary results, will debate in a single JUNIOR B FINALS debate.
  - 28.3. Teams on a total of **six wins** after the Finals will be invited to the GCD Grand Final Presentations to receive medals.
  - 28.4. Teams on a total of **five wins** after the Finals will be awarded Junior B Runners-Up certificates.
  - 28.5. Teams on a total of **four wins** after the Finals will be awarded Junior B Finalist certificates.

## TEAMS

29. Schools may register a maximum of three teams per division.
30. Teams should contain a minimum of four members and must not contain more than five members.
31. No debater may debate more than once in the same round.
  - 31.1. Debaters are considered to "have debated" if they were a first, second or third speaker; or if they were a fourth team member in a short preparation room.

- 31.2. Each round, students who debate must accurately and honestly provide their full name, school, and team number to the adjudicator, who must record this information correctly on the official score sheet.
32. Team lists will be required to be submitted for teams successfully proceeding to the *Finals Series*.
33. Students are permitted to debate in a higher division than their regular school year level but must remain in this division for the entire season.
34. Students are not permitted to debate in a lower division than is determined by their year level, or in a lower division than that in which they commence the season, unless special permission is granted by the Management Committee.
  - 34.1. For example, once a student has debated in the Open A division, they may not debate in the Open B division in the same year.
35. If any of the above requirements are breached, the team in breach may be disqualified, or will be otherwise dealt with at the discretion of the Management Committee.
36. Teams having debated against a team in breach of the above requirements can be accredited a win.

## TOPICS

37. Topics for the season are formed through a collective effort of the Management Committee.
38. Schools are afforded the opportunity to provide feedback on proposed *Prepared* topics as they appear in a DRAFT version of the competition Prospectus at the AGM.
39. Topics for *Short Preparation* debates are endorsed by the Management Committee and are only released to Venue Coordinators on the day of a debate, no more than 2 hours prior to the commencement of the *Short Preparation* session, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
40. Schools are not afforded the opportunity to dispute a topic once it has been distributed, either to a Venue Coordinator on the day for a *Short Preparation* debate, or to the Association via the final competition prospectus for *Prepared* debates.
41. Schools who take issue with a distributed topic have the option to forfeit the debate; no postponements will be awarded on this basis.

## SHORT PREPARATION DEBATES

42. Teams will argue the side of the debate as it appears on the official GCD draw.
43. Speech lengths will be the same as for prepared debates.
44. Teams will be given the following preparation times for *Short Preparation* debates:
  - 44.1. Junior divisions                      1  $\frac{3}{4}$  hours

- 44.2. Intermediate divisions 1 ½ hours
- 44.3. Open divisions 1 hour
- 45. Teams that arrive late for a preparation session will not be granted any extra time.
- 46. Teams must have no more than four members in the preparation room.
- 47. Teams may take into the preparation room:
  - 47.1. a dictionary,
  - 47.2. a thesaurus,
  - 47.3. a book of quotes,
  - 47.4. watches and/or stopwatches (no smart watches allowed)
  - 47.5. pens/pencils, blank paper and blank palm cards.
- 48. Teams are not to take into the preparation room:
  - 48.1. any electronic devices (including mobile phones, smart glasses, laptops and smart watches),
    - 48.1.1. In the case of students with documented medical conditions (i.e. diabetes), exemptions allowing a mobile phone to be in the preparation room are available.
    - 48.1.2. School coordinators must contact the GCD Committee before the beginning of the season to request an exemption.
    - 48.1.3. Where an exemption is allowed, the mobile phone in question must be positioned in a location visible to the Venue Coordinator and other supervising staff (i.e. on a windowsill or table near the door).
  - 48.2. paper and palm cards with any writing on them whatsoever,
  - 48.3. scaffolds or prompt sheets,
  - 48.4. bags, including totes and shopping bags,
  - 48.5. any other supporting items not expressly stated on the allowed items lists.
- 49. Students are permitted to communicate with each other, designated Gold Coast Debating representatives, and their adjudicator.
  - 49.1. They must not communicate with coaches, parents, members of the community, or students from outside their team.
- 50. The rules contained in this section apply from when the topic is given out until the debate has concluded and the adjudication has been delivered.
- 51. Any breach of these rules could mean the offending team forfeits the debate, is disqualified from the competition, or is subject to any other sanction as seen fit by the GCD Committee.

## **AWARDS**

- 52. At the conclusion of the season, titles are awarded in each division, including Champion Team, Runners-Up and Speaker of the Debate for the Grand Final.

53. The overall Champion School trophy is awarded to the school with the greatest number of teams who progress the furthest in the competition.
54. Most Successful School is awarded to the school with the highest percentage of teams that progress to the *Finals Series*.

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## DEBATE PROCEDURE

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### TEAM NUMBERS

55. It is expected that on debate night, both teams will have four members present – three speakers and a person to be the chairperson or timekeeper, fulfilled by the affirmative and negative teams respectively.
  - 55.1. Where teams can only field three members, any member of the community can fill in as a chairperson or timekeeper, including coaches, parents, siblings or other students.
  - 55.2. Where teams can only field two or fewer members, they must forfeit the debate. In accordance with clause 59 below, teams have 30 minutes from the scheduled state time of a *Prepared* debate, and until the scheduled start time for a *Short Preparation* debate, to field a team of three.

### DUTIES OF THE CHAIRPERSON

56. The chairperson will be provided with an official GCD script to assist them with their responsibilities. The chairperson should:
  - 56.1. declare the debate open,
  - 56.2. state the topic being debated,
  - 56.3. state the names of the teams debating (including number) and the names of their speakers,
  - 56.4. state the division of the debate,
  - 56.5. state the speaking time and the timing of warning bells,
  - 56.6. call each speaker to speak in turn (speakers should only be called on to speak after the adjudicator has signalled to the chairperson that they are ready to proceed),
  - 56.7. call on the adjudicator to give their adjudication,
  - 56.8. call on a member of the losing team to offer a 'vote of thanks',
  - 56.9. call on a member of the winning team to offer a 'vote of thanks'
  - 56.10. declare the debate closed.

## DUTIES OF THE TIMEKEEPER

57. The timekeeper is responsible for:

- 57.1. timing and recording the duration of each speech,
  - 57.1.1. This information must be visible to the adjudicator.
- 57.2. ringing clear warning bells and final bells for all speakers in accordance with the structure outlined below.

58. The negative team should provide a timing device, bell and whiteboard marker.

- 58.1. The use of a phone as a timer is permitted, so long as:
  - 58.1.1. the timekeeper was not in the preparation room and they do not communicate with their team until after the debate,
  - 58.1.2. OR the phone is obtained after the preparation time has concluded, and the timekeeper does not communicate with their team once they have obtained it and until the debate has been declared closed.
  - 58.1.3. AND the adjudicator is aware that a phone is being used for the timer.

59. The following speech times apply for debates (indicated by bell rings):

	<b>Speech Length</b>	<b>Warning Bell(s) (1 ring)</b>	<b>Final Bell (2 rings)</b>	<b>Late Bell (3 rings)</b>
<b>Junior B</b>	4 minutes	3 minutes	4 minutes	4 mins 30 secs
<b>Junior A</b>	5 minutes	4 minutes	5 minutes	5 mins 30 secs
<b>Inter B</b>	6 minutes	5 minutes	6 minutes	6 mins 30 secs
<b>Inter A</b>	7 minutes	1 & 6 minutes	7 minutes	7 mins 30 secs
<b>Open (A&amp;B)</b>	8 minutes	1 & 7 minutes	8 minutes	8 mins 30 secs

## POSITIONING OF TEAMS

60. The affirmative team sits to the right of the chairperson and the negative team sits to the left.

- 60.1. The chairperson must sit closest to the negative team and the timekeeper closest to the affirmative team.

## COMMUNICATION DURING DEBATES

61. Once the debate has started, speakers must not communicate with anyone except the adjudicator or venue coordinator. This includes the chairperson and timekeeper.

- 61.1. For long preparation debates, the start of the debate is when the chairperson's speech commences.
- 61.2. For short preparation debates, the start of the debate is when the teams receive the topic from the Venue Coordinator.

- 61.3. Communication includes and is not limited to mouthing, whispering and gesturing.
- 61.4. During the speaking portion of a debate, speaking team members are permitted to communicate quietly about their case and rebuttal.

### **ABSENCE OF AN ADJUDICATOR**

- 62. If no adjudicator is present at the time scheduled for the commencement of a debate, the teams involved should speak with the Venue Coordinator.
  - 62.1. If no adjudicator can be fielded within 30 minutes of the time scheduled for the commencement of the debate, where possible, both teams will be accredited a win. In a *Finals Series* debate, the GCD Committee will determine the fairest outcome possible.

### **ABSENCE OF A TEAM**

- 63. For *Prepared* debates, teams have 30 minutes from the designated start time to be at the debate venue and ready to begin proceeding.
- 64. For *Short Preparation* debates, teams have until the designated start time of the debate (not the preparation session) to be at the debate venue and ready to begin proceedings.
- 65. Where this does not occur, the GCD Committee will rule whether a forfeit has occurred. In that case, the team present will be accredited a win and the forfeiting team will be subject to the conditions outlined later in this document.

### **PREPARING THE WRONG SIDE**

- 66. Teams must prepare the side of the debate allocated to them on the official GCD draw.
- 67. Where a team arrives on time for a debate, but has prepared the incorrect side, that team has two options:
  - 67.1. take 30 minutes to correct the issue by preparing arguments for the correct side, in accordance with the preparation rules for that debate (ie. *Short Preparation* conditions still apply where this was a *Short Preparation* debate) or
  - 67.2. forfeit the debate.
- 68. Where a team arrives late for a *Prepared* debate, and has prepared the incorrect side, that team must forfeit the debate, unless the GCD Committee approves an alternative due to exceptional circumstances.

## UNOFFICIAL OR 'FRIENDLY' DEBATES

69. Where an official debate cannot take place for any reason, team members present should be offered (as far as practical) the opportunity to debate unofficially for practice and feedback.
  - 69.1. Where possible, an adjudicator will be provided for this purpose.
  - 69.2. During unofficial debates, teams are encouraged to:
    - 69.2.1. include prepared rebuttal points as though arguments were presented by an opposition,
    - 69.2.2. speak twice to fill in for absent team members,
    - 69.2.3. have other members of the community step in as absent team members,
    - 69.2.4. or take any other reasonable measure to facilitate a worthwhile experience.

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## CONDUCT AT DEBATING

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### CODE OF CONDUCT

70. Schools must take active measures to ensure that the conduct of their participants and spectators is in-line with the clauses below, and the rest of this document. They must ensure debaters and their families are aware of these expectations through methods such as signing a copy of this page.
71. All present at debating, including adjudicators, participants, coaches and spectators are to:
  - 71.1. be respectful and professional at all times,
  - 71.2. ensure the proper treatment of all facilities and equipment at the venue, including leaving rooms as they were found,
  - 71.3. respect that, in the absence of gross misconduct or other breach of this document, the adjudicator's decision is expertly informed and final,
  - 71.4. present any feedback in a manner that is constructive, professional and respectful.
72. There is *zero tolerance* for any conduct that creates an offensive or intimidating environment for anyone at debating. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - 72.1. any and all physical or verbal abuse,
  - 72.2. intimidation or degradation of or by an adjudicator, team member, coach, venue coordinator, member of the GCD Committee, spectator, or anyone else present,
  - 72.3. displays of poor sportsmanship.

## RECORDING OF DEBATES

73. Filming, photographing or recording of a person under the age of 18 without the correct permission is *illegal*, even where they only appear in the background.
74. Absolutely no audio and/or visual recording or photography of debates is permitted, even where a parent is only filming their own child, or a school their own students.
  - 74.1. At times, GCD may officially record debates for training purposes or at the Grand Finals with the appropriate “Use of Image Consent” forms.
75. Any breach of the clauses within this document by any participant or spectator can result in action against the relevant team at the discretion of the GCD Committee. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - 75.1. forfeiture of the debate,
  - 75.2. disqualification from the competition,
  - 75.3. banning of individual participants or spectators.

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## VENUE COORDINATORS

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76. Venue Coordinators have a number of responsibilities and are paid an honorarium for their invaluable time and efforts.
  - 76.1. The honorarium amount is specified in the prospectus each year.
77. The GCD Committee will aim to provide as much support as possible to new Venue Coordinators.
78. Venue Coordinators should:
  - 78.1. provide adequate signage and/or directions,
  - 78.2. be responsible for safety precautions including adequate lighting and emergency access,
  - 78.3. complete a detailed Risk Management Plan within their school's requirements,
  - 78.4. have the furniture in debating rooms set up in the required fashion before teams arrive, or organise for teams to do so, allowing time so that *Short Preparation* is not shortened,
  - 78.5. provide chairpersons' speeches, timekeeper sheets, and adjudicator score sheets for each room,
    - 78.5.1. Venue Coordinators are NOT responsible for providing adjudicators with writing paper, or teams with palm cards, whiteboard markers, stopwatches or bells.
  - 78.6. be responsible for briefing all debaters and coaches on the *Short Preparation* rules and expectations, and act to uphold them,

- 78.7. be contactable at all times via mobile phone and be able to contact the GCD Committee if required,
- 78.8. be visible and approachable for the entirety of the evening, including during preparation sessions and whilst debates are running.
  - 78.8.1. This means that they should not adjudicate debates or watch their own teams, unless they do so from outside the room where they are still approachable.
- 78.9. be vigilant in policing the rules of the competition and reporting any issues to the GCD Committee, to ensure a fair and rewarding competition,
- 78.10. collect a properly completed score sheet from each adjudicator, along with any notes they may choose to submit,
- 78.11. submit debate results by 3:00pm the day after the debate round,
- 78.12. keep a record of the debate results for each round until the end of the Grand Finals for that year,
- 78.13. comply with any other reasonable requests made by the Management Committee, to ensure a smooth-running and professional competition.

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## ADJUDICATORS

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- 79. Adjudicators are paid an honorarium for debates they adjudicate.
  - 79.1. The rate of pay is specified in the prospectus each year.
- 80. Adjudicators must complete and submit a new *Adjudicator Registration Form* each year.
  - 80.1. Adjudicators who do not submit a new form each year will not be paid and risk not being counted towards their school's adjudicator allocation.

### PROVISION OF ADJUDICATORS

- 81. Each year, GCD requires a pool of adjudicators to allocate for each competition round.
- 82. It is a condition of participation in this competition that schools provide, at minimum, one appropriately qualified adjudicator for every two teams entered in the competition.
  - 82.1. In the case of odd team numbers, the number of required adjudicators is rounded up to favour the provision of more adjudicators.
- 83. *Level 1 Adjudicators* are qualified to adjudicate Junior B, Junior A and Intermediate B divisions only.

- 83.1. *Level 1 Adjudicators* who are in Year 11 and Year 12 will only adjudicate Intermediate B debates where the allocation of *Level 2 Adjudicators* is exhausted.
84. *Level 2 Adjudicators* are qualified to adjudicate all divisions.
85. Therefore, if a school enters three teams in Intermediate B and five teams in Open B, they would be required to provide at least two Level 1 Adjudicators and three Level 2 Adjudicators (or five Level 2 Adjudicators).
86. Schools are encouraged to provide as many adjudicators as possible.
  - 86.1. Schools should consider that adjudicators do need to be able to be receptive to training, speak confidently, and deal with disheartened teams and parents. Schools should avoid providing adjudicators, particularly young students, who might not respond well to those requirements.
87. Where schools are only able to provide the minimum requirement, the adjudicators provided must be prepared to be called on for every round of the competition.
88. The number of adjudicators that a school must provide does not diminish as their teams are no longer in the competition. In the *Finals Series*, panels of adjudicators are used to decide debates and it is therefore necessary to be able to access the full pool of adjudicators.
89. School Coordinators having difficulty providing adjudicators should contact the GCD Committee to discuss other options.

## **QUALIFICATIONS OF ADJUDICATORS**

90. Adjudicators are required to have completed official GCD Adjudicator training, or received an exemption from doing so from the Committee, in the year 2024 or later.
  - 90.1. Any training completed before 2024, or training from other debating associations, is not recognised without approval from the Vice President.
  - 90.2. Training must have been provided by the Vice President or someone appointed by them in order to be considered “official GCD training”.
  - 90.3. School coordinators may not train their own adjudicators without permission from the Vice President.
91. Adjudicators should have at least a basic knowledge of debating or be responsible for obtaining the same before completing adjudicator training.
92. Current Year 11 or Year 12 students (who are 16 and older) can be qualified as Level 1 Adjudicators only.
  - 92.1. Younger students may not be adjudicators
93. Adjudicators must hold a current Blue Card that is linked to Gold Coast Debating, or hold a valid exemption as determined by Blue Card Services Queensland, prior to the commencement of debates.

## NON-AVAILABILITY OF ADJUDICATORS

94. The GCD Committee will liaise directly with adjudicators to lighten the responsibility of School Coordinators.
95. Where adjudicators become unavailable, it is the responsibility of the adjudicator to inform the Vice-President via the GCD phone number.
96. Where the Vice President is not able to enlist the minimum number of required adjudicators from a given school for a given round, **schools failing to provide an adjudicator may have one of their teams forfeit their debate, or their debate postponed.**
97. Where an adjudicator misses a scheduled debate without notice, they may be subject to disciplinary action by the Management Committee, including forfeiting their honorariums for the season.
98. Schools providing adjudicators who miss debates without notice may also be subject to disciplinary action by the Committee.

## SUBMITTING RESULTS

99. Adjudicators are required to record the result of a debate on the official Results Sheet provided by GCD at the host school and return these sheets to the Venue Coordinator at the completion of the debate night.
  - 99.1. Adjudicators must ensure that all parts of the Result Sheet are completed, in full.
  - 99.2. Adjudicators must not award a tie in their decisions. Each debate must have a winner.

## CONDUCT OF ADJUDICATORS

100. Adjudicators should conduct themselves in accordance with all clauses in this document and according to their official GCD training.
  - 100.1. They must be adequately prepared for their role, act without bias, and represent themselves, their school and GCD to a high standard.
101. The purpose of an adjudicator is to encourage and educate speakers. There is never a need for an adjudicator to be overly critical, harsh, or otherwise unsupportive of debaters' efforts.
102. Adjudicators are responsible for ensuring that they are appropriately qualified for the debates to which they are allocated, and that they do not have any conflicts of interest.
  - 102.1. Conflicts of interest should be reported to the Venue Coordinator so that adjudicators can be swapped around.
103. Any adjudicator that displays conduct contravening any part of this document may be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to forfeiture of honorarium,

mandatory attendance at an adjudication training or refresher course, or seasonal or permanent dismissal from GCD.

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## POSTPONING A DEBATE

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104. Rescheduling a debate should only occur when the scheduled debate clashes with an unavoidable school commitment – camps, award nights, eisteddfods, school holidays – or other extenuating circumstances as approved by the Management Committee.
105. Postponements must be requested through the official form on the GCD website.
- 105.1. Schools should not contact each other to arrange postponements.
106. The following rules must be adhered to in regard to requested postponements:
- 106.1. ALL postponements will be held on another scheduled debate round and at an allocated debate venue, or, where absolutely necessary, another suitable date as agreed to by the two schools and the Committee.
- 106.2. Postponement requests (for approved reasons), made at least two weeks before a scheduled debate, will be AUTOMATICALLY postponed.
- 106.3. Postponement requests received less than two weeks before a scheduled debate will only be granted under exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the GCD Committee.
- 106.4. Schools are expected to ensure that their students are available for any necessary catch-up debates on scheduled debate evenings.
- 106.5. Schools unavailable for a postponed debate on a scheduled debate round must request a postponement of their own in accordance with the clauses above.
- 106.6. Where the above procedures do not result in a mutually accepted date for a catch-up debate, the Committee will decide and advise of the fairest solution.

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## FORFEITING A DEBATE

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107. In the event that a school has to forfeit a debate, they are required to complete the official form on the GCD website as soon as they know they will not be able to field a team.
108. Where necessary, the GCD Committee will contact opposing schools and adjudicators.

109. Forfeiting a debate will result in the team not being eligible for inclusion in the *Finals Series*.

109.1. A team may appeal for Special Consideration to progress to the *Finals Series* if the forfeit is due to circumstances beyond the team's control. To be granted Special Consideration, the team must submit a formal appeal as outlined in this document.

110. Schools that have a substantial number of forfeited debates over the course of a season may be subject to disciplinary action by the Committee.

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## APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

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### APPEALING THE DECISION OF A DEBATE

111. The basic tenet of all GCD competitions is that “the adjudicator’s decision is final”.

112. Decisions should only be appealed where there was gross misconduct on the part of the adjudicator, a significant rule breach or technical error/oversight, or other exceptional circumstances rendering the decision genuinely compromised.

113. In cases where teams / coaches / coordinators are dissatisfied with a decision for other reasons, coordinators should refer to ‘requests for feedback’ below.

114. In the event of a team wishing to appeal against the decision of a debate, the appealing school’s Coordinator must contact the Vice President, in writing (via email), within seven days of the debate in question. Appeals must state the following:

114.1. the date, topic and division of the debate,

114.2. the teams debating,

114.3. the name of the adjudicator, where available,

114.4. the basis of the appeal,

115. The Vice President will investigate the appeal and forward all available information and their recommendation to the President for a final decision.

115.1. The decision shall be made in consultation with the Management Committee.

116. Once the decision had been made, the President will forward the decision, in writing, to the school concerned.

116.1. The decision is final and is not open to further review.

117. Only appeals against the decision of a debate are to be dealt with in this manner. For general complaints or requests for feedback, please see the section below.

## **APPEALING FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION**

118. If a team has had to forfeit due to 'circumstances beyond their control', the team may appeal for Special Consideration.
119. 'Circumstances beyond their control' refers to a situation that is impossible for *the students themselves to resolve*.
- 119.1. This may refer to a sudden illness / injury / accident, or a family tragedy of a pressing or traumatic nature.
  - 119.2. Any situation deemed to be 'circumstances beyond their control' must have arisen in a time frame that negates the possibility of postponing the debate.
120. Poor team organisation, internal team disputes, assessment deadlines and both co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are not grounds for Special Consideration.
121. To appeal for Special Consideration of a forfeit, the appealing school's Coordinator must contact the President, in writing (via email), within seven days of the debate in question. Appeals must state the following:
- 121.1. the date, topic and division of the debate,
  - 121.2. the teams debating,
  - 121.3. the basis of the appeal,
122. The President will investigate the appeal and a decision will be made in consultation with the Management Committee.
123. Once a decision has been reached, the President will notify the appealing school in writing.
- 123.1. The decision of the President is final and not open to further review.

## **GENERAL COMPLAINTS AND REQUESTS FOR FEEDBACK**

124. A general complaint is NOT an appeal against a decision, but rather a noted issue that a member of the community feels it is important to bring to the attention of the Committee, or a request for feedback where a team and/or coach do not fully understand a decision.
125. General complaints or requests for feedback about adjudicators and/or decisions should be directed to the Vice President via email.
126. General complaints about other aspects of the competition or association should be directed to the President via email.