

Equal Opportunities Cup Inter-School Debate Competition Competition Guidelines

I. Objectives

Providing engaging opportunities for young people to understand the current situation of equal opportunities in Hong Kong and raising public awareness of the four anti-discrimination ordinances to eliminate the attitude of discrimination through participating in debate competitions.

II. Eligibility for Participation

1. All secondary schools or international schools registered with the Education Bureau are eligible to participate in the competition. Each participating school can send one team to take part in the competition, and participants of each team must be students at that school during the competition.

2. Each participating school must:

- Appoint at least one qualified mentor (such as someone with experience in debate, general studies, or language teaching) to serve as an adjudicator for the first round, second round, and up to the semifinals.
- Provide a competition venue for at least one day, which must include rooms for the competitions/school auditorium, a judges' lounge, and two preparation rooms (for both the affirmative and negative teams).
- Once the mentors appointed by the participating schools are confirmed by the Organizing Committee (hereafter the Organizer) and arranged to serve as adjudicators for the competition on the designated day, they must attend punctually. If they are unable to attend due to reasons, they must notify the Organizer three days before the competition and provide a substitute mentor to fulfill the adjudicating role.
- Each team should consist of 4 to 10 members, 4 of whom as formal representatives of the school for the competition and the remaining 1 to 6 members as standbys.
- Each team must appoint at least one representative to attend a briefing session scheduled for January 25, 2025 (tentative).

III. General Rules

1. The competition will be conducted in Cantonese and on a knockout basis. Participation is limited to 32 teams. Winning teams of each round of the competition are qualified for the next round of the competition. If the number of applications exceeds the participation quota, the participating schools will be selected through a draw.
2. The debate motions and competition dates for each match will be decided by the Organizer, and participants may not raise objections. The assignment of teams to affirmative and opposite sides will be determined by a draw conducted by the Organizer.
3. The competition slots and debate motions for each team will be arranged and decided by the Organizer. Participating teams may not object or make modifications on their own. The tentative schedule for the competition period is as follows:

Dates	Events
February 15, 2025 (Saturday) and February 22, 2025 (Saturday)	1 st Preliminary
March 8, 2025 (Saturday)	2 nd Preliminary
March 29, 2025 (Saturday)	Quarter Final
April 12, 2025 (Saturday)	Semi-Final
May 3, 2025 (Saturday) (Tentative)	Grand Final and Award Ceremony

4. Arrangements for Late Arrival and Absence: If any team is late for 15 minutes or more on the day of the competition, the team will be disqualified, and their opponent will automatically advance to the next round.
5. Authority of the Organizer: The Organizer reserves the right and authority to invite anyone to serve as adjudicators, advisors, and chairpersons in the competition.

IV. Competition Rules

(1) Chairperson

1. The chairperson is responsible for overseeing the entire competition process.
2. Before the competition begins, the chairperson will announce the debate topic, the competition rules, and introduce the participating teams and adjudicators.
3. The chairperson has the authority to consult adjudicators regarding any disputes that arise during the competition and make a ruling accordingly. Participating teams must comply with this ruling; nonetheless, the Organizer also reserves the right to make a final decision on disputes.

(2) Timekeeper

1. The timekeeper must accurately and fairly track time and record it on the timekeeping sheet.
2. The timekeeper is responsible for completing the timekeeping record and must verify its accuracy before signing it at the end of the competition.

(3) Participating Teams

1. Each competition consists of two teams: one for the proposition and one for the opposition. For each match, each Team needs to send one Opening Speaker, two Speakers (Second and Third Speaker) and one Concluding Speaker. Participants must wear proper school uniforms.
2. Each speaker from participating schools must be listed on the application form. Changes to team members are not allowed unless approved by the Organizer prior to the competition under special circumstances.
3. Participating teams can use cue cards not larger than 15.6 cm × 9.5 cm during presentations. The chairperson will check the cue cards before the competition to ensure compliance. If the size does not meet the regulations, adjudicators may deduct 1 to 5 points from the team's total score at their discretion. Debaters may bring books, reference materials, and electronic devices to the venue, but these items are strictly prohibited on stage.
4. During the competition, any form of communication or information exchange is forbidden between the speakers on stage and the audience. Both teams' speakers, their responsible instructors (including team coaches or alumni), the chairperson and adjudicators can raise relevant concerns before the competition results are announced. Once the violation of competition rules is confirmed, the team violating the rules shall be disqualified.
5. All presentations in the competition must be in Cantonese, except when quoting names of people and/or books. If a foreign language is used outside of the abovementioned categories during the competition, team's speakers, instructors, the chairperson and adjudicators may raise concerns. Upon confirmation of a violation of the competition rules, adjudicators may deduct 1 to 5 points from that speaker's total score.
6. Personal attack, defamation, foul language or any rude behavior is not allowed during competition. The Chair can stop the Speaker if any of the said situations turns up. Both teams' speakers, their responsible instructors, the chairperson and adjudicators can present concerns before results are announced. Upon confirmed by the competition or adjudicators, points will be deducted from the responsible team as determined by the Organizer or adjudicators based on the circumstances.

7. Each participating school will send a representative to check the scores after the results are announced and sign for confirmation if they are correct. If there are any disputes regarding the scores, schools can raise them during the score review session to the adjudicators and the Organizer. Any appeals made after (1) the signing of the confirmation of the scores and (2) the announcement of the results will not be processed.

V. Rules of Delivery

(4) Durations and Points to Note for Presentations On-stage

1. The timekeeper will start counting down after the bell rings. Each speaker can only begin his/her speech after the timekeeper rings the bell.

2. The captains from both sides have a speaking time of 4 minutes each. The first and second speakers have a speaking time of 3 minutes each. The concluding speeches for both sides are allotted 4 minutes each. Prior to the concluding speeches from both sides, there will be a 1-minute preparation time.

3. When each speaker has one minute left, the timekeeper will ring the bell once to indicate the speaker's allocated time is about to end.

4. At the end of the allocated time, the timekeeper will ring the bell twice to indicate the speaker should conclude his/her speech as soon as possible.

5. After the 15-second grace period at the end of the allocated time, i.e. the 16th second after the allocated time, the timekeeper will ring the bell several times and points will be deducted from that Speaker.

6. Overtime penalty: after the 15-second grace period at the end of the allocated time (as indicated by the timer), each adjudicator will deduct five points from that Speaker for every five seconds. Duration shorter than five seconds will also be counted as five seconds. A Speaker's score may be deducted down to a minimum of 0 points.

7. The timekeeper is responsible for ensuring that the timing and signaling are accurate. Nonetheless, if there is an error on the part of the timekeeper, they must immediately consult the adjudicators. The adjudicators must collectively decide whether to compensate for the time lost or to adjust the scores accordingly (the adjudicators may collectively discuss and determine to adjust scores up or down by the same amount based on the circumstance).

8. Under any special circumstances, the adjudicators and the Organizer have the final decision-making authority.

(5) Rules of Free Debate (Applicable from Semi-final to Grand Final)

1. In the free debate, each side has two and a half minutes of speaking time.
2. During the free debate, debaters may choose to use their speaking time all at once or allocate it across multiple speeches. However, it is important to note that only one debater may speak at a time (unless one side's speaking time is exhausted, in this case the opposing side may send out multiple debaters to speak).
3. The affirmative side will speak first, followed by the opposite side, and this pattern will continue.
4. Debaters must stand while speaking, and the time calculation will be counted based on when they sit down (i.e., when a debater finishes speaking and sits down, the time calculation will be transferred to the other side; if a debater does not sit down after speaking, the time calculation will not be transferred).
5. During the free debate session, the timekeeper will signal once one minute before the speaking limit for that participating school, and will signal twice when the speaking time is over. There is no buffer time in this session; once the speaking time runs out, the chairperson will interrupt the speaker's speech immediately.
6. When one side's speaking time runs out, the chairperson will announce the remaining time for the other side, and that side can send one or more debaters to take turns speaking until the time runs out.
7. The total scores for the free debate session is 100 points.

(6) Unexpected Circumstances

If any situation arises that hinders the fairness of the competition, the Organizer, adjudicators, chairperson, or the participating schools may request an immediate termination of the debate.

VI. Rundown of Each Match

Order		Duration
1.	Captain of affirmative side	4min
2.	Captain of opposite side	4min
3.	1 st speaker of affirmative side	3min
4.	1 st speaker of opposite side	3min
5.	2 nd speaker of affirmative side	3min
6.	2 nd speaker of opposite side	3min
7.	Free Debate (Semi Final to Grand Final ; 2.5 minutes each team)	5min
8.	Preparation of Summary	1min
9.	Closing speech of opposite side	4min
10.	Closing speech of affirmative side	4min

VII. Judging Criteria

1. Each speaker can score a maximum of 100 points for each presentation. The 100 points include 40 for contents, 30 for delivery, 20 for organization and 10 for poise.

2. Free debate session has a maximum of 100 points for each team.

3. Each team can score a maximum of 20 points for cooperation.

4. A penalty system is in place; for details, please refer to the abovementioned penalties.

5. Criteria to decide the winning team:

- Each adjudicator has one vote, and the team with the higher number of votes wins;
- Each adjudicator will vote according to the scores they give to each Team of that match;
- In the event of split votes, the team with the highest total points wins. If both teams have identical total scores, adjudicators must discuss or adjust scores to determine the winner. There is no provision for a rematch in this competition.

6. In each match, one Best Debater will be designated, with the evaluation criteria based on the "Best Debater Ranking Scores." Each adjudicator assigns scores to both debaters, with the highest score receiving 1 point, the second highest receiving 2 points, and so on. Debaters with the same score will receive equal ranking points. The ranking points given by all adjudicators to each debater will be summed up, and the debater with the lowest ranking points will be declared the Best Debater of that match. If two or more debaters have the same ranking points, their total scores will be used to determine the winner, with the higher total score prevailing. If total scores are also tied, the adjudicators will confer to decide on the Best Debater.

VIII. Adjudicator

1. Each match will have three adjudicators, except for the semifinals and finals. In special circumstances, additional notifications will be provided.
2. The adjudicators' responsibility is to attend a debate match, observe and listen to the speeches of each debater, and award scores not exceeding the maximum limit.
3. Under no circumstances may teachers, coaches or alumni from the competing schools serve as adjudicators for that match, in order to ensure fairness.

IX. Awards

1. The competition will award one champion, one first runner-up, and two third-place winners.
 - Champion: Book vouchers valued at HKD 6,000 and a trophy.
 - First Runner-up: Book vouchers valued at HKD 4,000 and a trophy.
 - Third Place: Book vouchers valued at HKD 2,000 and a trophy.
 - Best Debater of the Grand Final: Book vouchers valued at HKD 800 and a trophy;
 - Best Debater of other rounds: Book vouchers valued at HKD 300 and a certificate.
2. The aforementioned awards will be presented on the day of the awards ceremony, following the conclusion of the grand final.

X. Application and Inquiries

1. Participants can complete the registration via Google Form (the QR Code is available on the poster, or you can visit <https://forms.gle/H43fBVP9uUy4NaTbA>). In case of multiple submissions, the latest version will be considered final.
2. The Organizer reserves the right to record the proceedings of each match for promotional purposes.
3. All disputes will be interpreted by the Organizer.
4. For any inquiries, please do not hesitate to call xxxxxxxx to contact the Organizer, or you can send an email to codebate@eoc.org.hk for inquiries with Equal Opportunities Commission.