

## DEBATE GUIDELINES

### FOR IHRFG CONFERENCE SESSIONS

The “debate” format is a fun and creative way to engage participants in a thought-provoking setting to study all sides of an issue. What follows are guidelines for mounting your mock trial, inspired in whole by the traditional Oxford-style debate format, which involves one side proposing and the other side opposing a sharply-framed motion. Session organizers should feel free to adapt these guidelines to best suit their objectives.

- The topic or question to be explored is reconfigured into a motion. E.g. “Applying a “participatory” approach to human rights grantmaking is a waste of time and money.” Or “Donor mappings are an (in)effective tracking and advocacy tool for expanding funding for human rights.” (For samples of concisely and cleverly crafted motions, visit [here](#).)
- The panel is comprised of a moderator, one or two proponents of the motion, and one or two opponents.
- The audience has the opportunity to vote in favor or against the motion before the debate and after the debate, and to ask questions of the presenters in between.
- For a sample of the Oxford debate in action, visit [Intelligence Squared](#).

#### FORMAT

Time	Who	What
10 min	Moderator	The motion is presented, with sufficient background/elementary/contextual information
2 min	Audience	The audience – with their feet, hands, or electronic poll – vote in favor or against the proposition, or undecided.
5 min	Yes/Pro Debater 1	Opening statement
5 min	No/Con Debater 1	Opening statement
5 min	Yes/Pro Debater 2	Opening statement
5 min	No/Yes Debater 2	Opening statement
10 min	Moderator/Debaters	Moderator leads question-and-answer exchange among panelists (rebuttals)
30 min	Audience	Moderator leads question-and-answer exchange between audience and panelists
5 min	Panelists	Closing argument/summation (1 minute each)
8 min	Audience	The audience – with their feet, hands, or electronic poll – vote again in favor or against the proposition, or undecided. Moderator asks one or two voters who changed their votes why they did so.
2 min	Moderator	Declaration of the winning side; final remarks and conclusion.

**Session Title:**

**Session Sponsors (names of institution(s)):**

**Session Organizers:** Name, Title, Organization

**Session Description:** Some background on the issue; what participants can expect in this session. This section will be copied into the program agenda, so best to make it enticing and accurate.

**The Motion:**

**Moderator:**

Full Name	Title, Organization	City, Country	Email

Biography:

**Proponent 1**

Full Name	Title, Organization	City, Country	Email

Biography:

**Proponent 2**

Full Name	Title, Organization	City, Country	Email

Biography:

**Opponent 1**

Full Name	Title, Organization	City, Country	Email

Biography:

**Opponent 2**

Full Name	Title, Organization	City, Country	Email
Biography:			

**Audio-Visual and Other Service Requests:** PC laptops, projectors, screens, a sound system, and wireless access to the internet will be provided. If your presenter would like to use his/her Mac laptop, he/she must bring the appropriate connector cables.

- ☐ Video conferencing
- ☐ DVD player
- ☐ Video from website (please list URL):
- ☐ Powerpoint presentation
- ☐ Other:

**Please indicate if a panelist will require bilingual interpretation:**

Panelist's name:

Native language:

☐ American Sign Language?