**Judge’s Guidelines**

A judge’s role in ethics bowl is to gauge a team’s breadth and depth of thought as applied to a specific ethical scenario (called a case). These guidelines will help to explain how to evaluate a team’s performance:

* Teams have received the cases several weeks, if not months, in advance. They have “practiced” by meeting to discuss the ethical components of the cases and to formulate their analyses. During Ethics Bowl, they know that the cases they will discuss come from this set, but they don’t know which case will be used in any given round, nor do they know the question asked (until announced by the moderator). The team will then have a few moments to consult and can make notes; however, they cannot bring notes into the room with them.
* A good answer indicates both breadth and depth of thought, meaning that the team recognizes that there are multiple viewpoints or possible ‘answers,’ discusses them, and then explicates their own position about the case.
* The second team then has time to comment on the first team’s presentation. This commentary should be focused on the primary team’s answer. That is, during the commentary, the second team can ask for clarification, point out contradictions, ask for more information, etc. The second team should NOT use this time to present its analysis of the case. They have the opportunity to present a case during the other half of the match.
* During the answer, commentary and response, judges do not ask questions or comment. However, after the primary team responds to the other team’s commentary, the moderator will indicate that it is time for the judges to ask questions. This is the longest individual portion of the match because the questions posed give students the opportunity to think on their feet – they cannot prepare for this portion of the match. As a result, judges will gain more insight into the breadth and depth of the team’s analysis of the case.
* A judge’s question should be short and to-the-point (usually 30 seconds or less) and should be designed to help probe the team’s understanding of the case. Please do not use this opportunity to argue your own perspective.
* Most importantly, please remember that the main criterion for judging is to evaluate teams based on the breadth and depth of their thinking about a difficult ethical situation. That means they should have addressed and evaluated opposing or different viewpoints and explained why they reached the conclusion they did. Judges should NOT engage a team in an argument based on a personal viewpoint nor score a team based on whether the judge agrees or disagrees with the team’s position.
* On occasion, a team may discover that they want to modify or perhaps change an aspect of its initial “position” as a result of the second team’s commentary or a judge’s question. Some may think this indicates that the team didn’t fully think through its initial position. However, because the ethics bowl is about ethical inquiry, and because these are high school students, and because changing one’s mind can be considered a sign of fluid rather than crystallized intelligence – a hallmark of higher-order thinking – changing or modifying a position isn’t necessary negative. Before making a judgment, consider several questions: Was the team’s initial position well-founded and thought-out? Is their revised position well-founded and thought-out? In short, modifying or changing a position needs to be judged on its individual merits.

* Finally, at the bottom of the score sheet, a team can receive 1–5 points for engaging in productive and respectful dialogue as opposed to combative debate. This is to underscore the important aspect we are trying to value in ethics bowl. Teams that earn five points in this category demonstrate their awareness that an ethics bowl is about participating in a collegial, collaborative, philosophical discussion aimed at earnestly thinking through difficult ethical issues. It is not a contest between adversaries. Teams that score poorly in this category are those that resort to rhetorical flourishes; adopt a condescending, critical tone; and are unduly adversarial.