

5th RGNUL NATIONAL NEGOTIATION COMPETITION, 2025

RULEBOOK

Presented by:

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Chapter I: PRELIMINARY

Article 1 – Definitions

- a. **“Assessment Criteria”** means the scoring and evaluation criteria set out for the Expert Assessors.
- b. **“Breakout Rooms”** refers to the online sub-meeting rooms on the WebEx Platform [as decided by the Organizing Committee] to be used for the Main-Rounds, and Breakout Sessions.
- c. **“Competition Problem”** refers to a problem framed by the Problem Committee, to be used in the Competition Sessions.
- d. **“Competition”** refers to the 5th RGNUL National Negotiation Competition 2025.
- e. **“Confidential Information”** means factual information, given exclusively to one party, in accordance with the rules of the competition.
- f. **“Eligible Student”** means a student enrolled in an undergraduate/postgraduate law degree program in any of the universities recognized by the Bar Council of India, as on 1st September of the year of the competition.
- g. **“Expert Assessor(s)”** refers to persons(s) nominated and/or selected by the Organizing Committee, who evaluates and scores the performance of the Negotiating Team(s) during a negotiation session in accordance with the Competition Rules. All assessors shall provide to the Organizing Committee a Statement of Trust declaring their neutrality, impartiality and independence to assess the teams of the competition; and disclosing any conflict of interests with the participants, or the university, if it may cause a hindrance to the assessment of the round.
- h. **“Feedback”** refers to the critique/comments provided by the Expert Assessors to the participants, in relation to each of their performances in the Main Round, either individually or collectively.

- i. **“General Information”** refers to factual information related to a Competition Session, which shall be accessible to all the Participating Teams.
- j. **“General Lobby”** refers to the Main Session [as decided by the Organizing Committee] where all participants and assessors will gather before the Main Round begins and to which a Negotiating Team reports to during a Caucus. The Session Supervisors and all members providing technical assistance to participants and assessors will remain present in this General Lobby throughout.
- k. **“Host Institution”** refers to the Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab.
- l. **“Institution(s)”** refers to all other Colleges and Universities across India participating in the competition.
- m. **“Negotiation Round”** refers to the stage of Competition Session immediately following the disclosure of Confidential Information, where the teams are tasked to negotiate on the Competition Problem.
- n. **“Negotiating Pair”** refers to a team comprising of two participants - one Counsel and one Client - from the same institution.
- o. **“Official Website”** refers to the official website of the Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution, RGNUL.
- p. **“Organizing Committee”** refers to members of the Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution (CADR-RGNUL) and selected members of other collaborating organisations.
- q. **“Participant”** refers to any person participating in this Competition.
- r. **“Penalty”** refers to the subtraction in marks or disqualification of participants or any other disciplinary action taken by the Organizing Committee on account of any violation of these rules.
- s. **“Registration Fee”** refers to the fee to be paid by Selected Teams for participation in the competition.

- t. **“Room Coordinator”** refers to a member(s) of the Host Institution designated as such, in charge of overseeing the smooth conduct of a particular Breakout Room.
- u. **“Rule”** refers to a particular individual rule contained in this Rulebook, along with the sub-rules/ points thereunder. The Participants are deemed to know and accept these rules on the account of their registration in the Competition.
- v. **“Session Supervisor”** refers to the member(s) of the Host Institution designated as such, in charge of overseeing the smooth conduct of every Competition Session.

Article 2 – Language of Verbal Communication

The official language of the competition shall be English. Communication in any other international, national, or regional language during the competition rounds shall not be permitted.

Article 3 – Team Composition

Each participating team shall consist of two eligible students from the same university, acting as Client and Counsel. No changes will be allowed once the composition has been communicated to the Organizing Committee.

Each university may nominate a maximum of one team. By applying for the competition, the teams shall be deemed to have accepted the rules, terms and conditions of the conditions as stated in this document.

Article 4 – Registration

- a. The registration fee for the competition will be **INR 6500/-** exclusive of GST.
- b. The registration shall be a two-step process consisting of Provisional Registration and Final Registration.

- c. The provisional registration can be done by filling the **google form**, on or before **11:59 p.m., 5th October, 2025**.
- d. The Organizing Committee will notify the selected universities through a confirmation mail for final registration. The teams allotted a slot must make payment of registration fee latest by **11:59 p.m., 12th October, 2025**, failing which the slot shall be deemed to have been forfeited.
- e. The Final Registration Form and Payment Link will be provided in the confirmation mail.
- f. Each team shall be provided with a team code/name or *nom de guerre*, upon registration, for the purposes of all the rounds of the competition. The participating teams are required to use the team *nom de guerre* for all purposes during all the rounds of the competition. The teams must not disclose the names of the team members or their university to the judges of the competition.

Article 5 – Coach

- a. Each Participating Team may register up to one Coach which is to be informed to the Organizing Committee through a mail on cadr@rgnul.ac.in latest by **11:59 p.m., 12th October, 2025**.
- b. Any such appointment of coach will be confirmed by the Organizing Committee on a discretionary basis, and it is to be informed prior to appointment to ensure there is no conflict of interest, especially with the expert assessors.
- c. In case of an occurrence wherein an individual ends up as both an Expert Assessor and a Coach, the team they are coaching will be disqualified in case there was no prior intimations.
- d. Coaches will be allowed to spectate on the rounds of their teams, and provide guidance only prior to release of Confidential Information for the round; and subject to conclusion of the feedback session for the round.

- e. Coaches are not allowed to engage in scouting of other teams. Such conduct shall lead to immediate disqualification of the team that they are coaching.
- f. The Organization Committee reserves the right to notify any future guidelines in this regard.

Chapter II: Competition Format

Article 6 – Arrangement of Rounds

- a. The competition shall consist of two Preliminary Rounds, followed by the Quarter-Finals, the Semi-Finals and a Grand Finale round.
- b. Each Preliminary Round will last for 50 minutes, the Quarter-Final and Semi-Final rounds will last for 60 minutes and the Grand Finale will last for 70 minutes. An ideal Competition Session consist of the following stages:
 - i. Reporting to the General Lobby – 10 minutes prior to the Main Round
 - ii. Audio-Visual Check in the Main lobby
 - iii. Rounds – 50/60/70 minutes (inclusive of 10 minutes of feedback and scoring session)
- c. The top eight teams of the Preliminary Rounds shall proceed to the Quarter-Final Round. The winning team of each Negotiation round in the Quarter Final Round shall proceed to the Semi-Final Round. Thereafter, the winning team of each of the Semi-Final Round shall proceed to the Final Round.
- d. Each participant shall mandatorily act as a client and a counsel in the preliminary rounds. Accordingly, after both the preliminary rounds, each participant must have acted as a client and a counsel, individually.

Article 7 – Competition Problem(s)

- a. Each Competition Problem consists of General Information, distributed to all Teams, and Confidential Information for the Requesting Party and Responding Parties distributed before the respective Competition rounds.

- b. There will be five (5) separate Competition Problems used during the Competition:
 - i. One Problem for the Preliminary Round 1
 - ii. One Problem for the Preliminary Round 2
 - iii. One Problem for the Quarter-Final Round
 - iv. One Problem for the Semi-Final Round
 - v. One Problem for the Final Round
- c. The General Information of Competition Problems will be made available on the Official Website tentatively by **10th October 2025**.
- d. The Teams must rely only on the facts mentioned in the Competition Problem. Teams are not empowered to create any new facts or change any of the fact of Competition Problem, but may make reasonable inference(s) only from the facts given in the problem.
- e. Clarifications are only to be requested for ambiguity or possible errors, and not for further information as each Problem will be self-contained.
- f. The Clarifications will be released by the Organizing Committee on the Official Website in accordance with the schedule.
- g. Requests for clarification can only be made through the google form using the [attached link](#) latest by **11:59 p.m., 10th October 2025**.
- h. The Problem Committee and the Organizing Committee, have the sole authority to interpret any Competition Problem.

Article 8 – Preliminary Rounds

- a. All participating teams will participate in two Preliminary Rounds.
- b. Each session will be evaluated and scored by two Expert Assessors assigned by the Host Institution.
- c. The preliminary rounds will be conducted on a progression basis. On the basis of the total scores and total votes received in the two preliminary rounds, the top eight (8) teams will then proceed to the Quarter-Final rounds.

Article 9 – Knock-out Rounds

- a. The Quarter-Final Rounds, and the Semi-Final Rounds shall be Knock-Out Rounds and the team winning in each room will qualify for the subsequent stages.

Article 10 – Grand Finale Rounds

- a. The winning team from each Competition Session of the Semi-Final rounds will advance to the Final Round.
- b. The Roles (as Responding Party and Requesting Party) of the teams will be decided by a draw of lots.
- c. The Final Round will be evaluated and scored by various eminent Expert Assessors, assigned by the Organizing Committee.

Article 11 – Negotiation Plan

- a. The parties shall submit a soft copy of the Negotiation Plan in (.doc/.docx and .pdf formats) to the Organizing Committee for each preliminary round by **28th October 2025, 11:59 p.m.** through the [attached link](#).
- b. Failure to comply with the Submission Date deadline will attract a penalty of 3 points per day.
- c. The Negotiation Plan should state the brief facts, core issues, strengths and weaknesses, zone of possible agreements and BATNAs & WATNAs.
- d. The format for the same should be Times New Roman/Garamond, black ink, size — 12, with 1.5 line spacing. The Plan should not contain footnotes, and should not disclose the identity of the team.

Chapter III: LOBBY AND BREAKOUT ROOM(S)

Article 12 – Release of Meeting Links

- a. The teams will receive links to the General Lobby 1 Hour prior to the start of each Competition round.
- b. Breakout rooms will be used by the teams during the different negotiation sessions.

Article 13 – Competition Room Composition During Main Round

During the Preliminary Rounds, there shall be 6 people present for each Main Round of a Competition Session - 4 negotiators [two from each team], and 2 Expert Assessors. Additionally, a Room Coordinator will also be present to ensure the smooth completion of round.

Article 14 – Confidential Information (CI)

- a. Prior to the Negotiation Round, the teams shall be provided with the CI of the side (Requesting/Responding) they will be representing in that particular round.
- b. At the scheduled time, the Confidential Information shall be made available to the participants, and the teams shall have access to the CI –30 minutes prior to the Preliminary Rounds, 40 minutes prior to the Quarter-Final Rounds, 40 minutes prior to the Semi-Final Rounds, and 50 minutes prior to the Grand Finale Round.

Article 15 – Assessment

- a. Expert Assessors will be selected and assigned by the Organizing Committee to score the performance and provide feedback to the Participants to help them move through the Competition rounds and improve their negotiation skills.
- b. The Organizing Committee will, as far as possible, make sure that in each Competition Session, Expert Assessors do not have conflict of interests with

the assigned Teams, in particular that Expert Assessors and Teams do not belong to the same Institution.

Article 16 – Feedback

- a. Each expert assessor may provide feedback to the competing teams.
- b. If an assessor decides to impose a penalty upon a competing team, they might inform the competing team concerned about the same and explain it to them. The competing teams are not allowed to show dissent as the assessors' call is final. The assessor may, however, explicitly indicate the rule violated, but shall not indicate the number of points subtracted.
- c. The assessor shall not reveal to any Team the results of their individual determinations and any Team's scores. During the feedback, assessors may refer to the Confidential Information.

Chapter IV: SCORING AND RESULTS

Article 17 – Scoring

The general criteria for scoring shall be as follows –

- a. **Opening Statements** – The Judges may assess the opening statement in terms of parameters including (but not restricted to) logic, clarity, coherence, analysis, structure, time management, and reference to the problem.
- b. **Identification of Issues** – The participants must be able to clearly identify and subsequently deal with such issues to establish their argument.
- c. **Teamwork and Team Camaraderie** – The teams here shall be tested on areas of mutual support, cooperation, and team coordination exhibited by both participants in each team during the session.
- d. **Legal Soundness in the arguments of the Counsel and Commercial Prudence in the arguments of the Client** – This section shall

essentially ensure role fulfilment by participants, and further encourage novel legal and commercial analysis supported by logic.

- e. **Question Answering Ability** – The ability of participants to respond to questions/feedback by judges shall be assessed under this head.

The detailed scoring criteria will be uploaded on the Centre's website a week before the competition.

Article 18 – Tie Breakers

- a. Negotiating Teams will be ranked and selected for the Quarter-Final Rounds based on their Total Preliminary Score.
- b. A 'win' shall be determined by the cumulative decision of the judges in any given preliminary round. A 'win' shall primarily be granted by the judges to the team that has scored higher in their round but that is not mandatory.
- c. A 'win' in any given round shall grant the team a score increment of 5% per win. This shall be referred to as their Score Multiplier. Explanation 1:
Total Preliminary Score = Preliminary 1 Score + Preliminary 2 Score + Score Multiplier
Score Multiplier = [$5 \times (\text{No. of Wins})$] / 100 * (Preliminary 1 Score + Preliminary 2 Score)
- d. In case the tie persists in the total Preliminary Score, the team with higher cumulative score in the Negotiation Plans shall proceed.
- e. In case of a tie in the score of two or more Negotiating Teams in the Knock - Out Rounds (Quarter-Finals, Semi-Finals, and Finals), the team that will advance to the next round shall be decided based on:
 - i. firstly, the total number of 'wins',
 - ii. in the case tie persists, the total marks scored in negotiation plan;

- iii. and in case there continues to be a tie, their ranking in the Preliminary Rounds of the Competition.

Article 19 – Dress Code

The Dress code for Competition is Western Business Formal for all genders.

Article 20 – Awards

- a. Winner
- b. Runner-Up
- c. Best-Negotiator – Prelim Rounds [based on Highest Cumulative score in prelims]
- d. Best-Negotiation Plan [based on Highest Cumulative score of the two Negotiation Plans]
- e. The Organizing Committee shall acknowledge the participation of all the teams and assessors at the competition with appropriate tokens of appreciation. E-certificates shall be provided to all those who have registered with the Organizing Committee and are present for the Valedictory function.

Article 21 – Disqualification

For the purposes of the Competition, and subject to the discretion of the Organizing Committee, the following acts shall result in disqualification of the participating team:

- a. Change in team composition.
- b. Failure to submit the Negotiation Plans.
- c. Disclosure of confidential information, except in the course of the concerned competition round.
- d. Causing unreasonable delay in the commencement of a round. The evaluation of reasonable limits shall be decided by the judges and the competition administrator and such decision shall be final and binding.

- e. Scouting and unfair conduct.
- f. Non-compliance with any other rule, mentioned herein.

Chapter V – MISCELLANEOUS RULES

Article 22 – Mode of Communication and Technical Orientation

The Organizing Committee reserves the right to notify a Virtual Protocol detailing the conduction of online rounds.

Article 23 – Residuary Rules

- a. The above rules are subject to change and modification as decided by the Host Institution and the Organizing Committee. All measures will be undertaken for fair and orderly conduct of the Competition. The decision of the Organizing Committee in all matters regarding the Competition shall be final.
- b. Time and deadlines will follow Indian Standard Time (IST). Rounds will be adjusted/scheduled, as far as possible, to avoid extreme inconvenience/problems to teams and assessors across different time zones.
- c. All Communications, Queries and Clarifications in relation to the Competition may be emailed to cadr@rgnul.ac.in. Any such queries and clarifications by Selected Teams must mention their Team Code/Name in the subject of the email.
- d. The Host Institution, through the Rules Committee and the Organizing Committee, has the sole authority to resolve ambiguities or inconsistencies arising out of these Rules, if any.

CONTACT DETAILS

All queries and requests for information can be directed to the Organizing Committee at our official email ID cadr@rgnul.ac.in. For any other query, please feel free to contact the following student coordinators:

Ms. Aditi (*Convenor*) - aditi21165@rgnul.ac.in

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