

IGSA INVITATIONAL DEBATING COMPETITION

Operations Manual

April 2026

Association of Heads of Independent Girls Schools' New South Wales Inc.
Trading as Independent Girls' Schools (IGSA)
ABN 81 660 358 175

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IGSA Archdale Debating 2026

The Association of Heads of Independent Girls' Schools NSW trading as Independent Girls' School Association (**IGSA**) and its members' schools organises many activities such as IGSA Archdale Debating during the course of a year. Students participating in these activities take part in practise and in competitions.

In 2026, IGSA may administer and convene IGSA Archdale Debating both remotely and at members' schools in which many students, parents, teachers, volunteers, adjudicators, officials and spectators participate in the Competition.

While IGSA and its members' schools take measures to make the activities as safe as reasonably possible for participants, there is a risk that students can be injured and suffer loss (including financial loss) and damage as a result of their participation in these activities, whether at practice or in actual events.

Such injury can occur while the student is engaging in or watching a non-sporting activity or travelling to and from the event. The injury may result from a student's actions, the actions of others, the state of the premises or equipment failure (e.g., a collapsed stage during a debating competition).

On some occasions, an injury can be serious (such as torn ligaments, dislocations, back injuries, concussion or broken bones). In very rare cases an injury can be life threatening or result in permanent disability.

Students could also suffer loss as a result of their personal property being lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed.

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

1 The Role of IGSA

- 1.01. The IGSA Invitational Debating Competition is an annual competition conducted by the Association of Heads of Independent Girls' Schools NSW trading as Independent Girls' School Association (**IGSA**) for the benefit of students from its members' schools.
- 1.02. All substantive matters relating to the IGSA Invitational Debating Competition are to be decided by IGSA.
- 1.03. The IGSA Invitational Executive Committee (as defined in Section 10) manages the day-to-day oversight and administration of the IGSA Invitational Debating Competition.
- 1.04. The IGSA Invitational Committee comprises the Executive Committee (as defined in Section 10), co-ordinators from members' schools, an IGSA Board Member and the Executive Officer of IGSA.
- 1.05. It is the role of the IGSA Board Member and the IGSA Executive Officer to facilitate the transfer of information between the IGSA Board and the IGSA Invitational Committee.
- 1.06. It is the role of the IGSA Archdale Convener to liaise with the IGSA Executive Committee Member and / or the IGSA Executive Officer to ensure the transfer of information pertaining to the IGSA Invitational Debating Competition, as described in 1.05.

PART II: THE CONDUCT OF THE ANNUAL COMPETITION

2 Formulation of the Competition Draw

Publication of the Draw - Dates and Venues

- 2.01 The dates and draw of the annual competition shall be presented and discussed at the annual end of season meeting of the IGSA Invitational Committee. The dates shall then be finalised by IGSA at a general meeting.
- 2.02 The finalised and confirmed draw for the annual competition, shall be circulated by the IGSA Invitational Convener.
- 2.03 The draw shall clearly indicate:
 - (1) The members' schools in each group.
 - (2) The "host" schools for each round (indicated by the school listed first on the draw); and
 - (3) The opposing schools for each round.
- 2.04 The annual competition shall be conducted so that it is completed by the end of the second week in September.
- 2.05 With the exception of debates rescheduled in accordance with this manual, the annual competition rounds shall take place on Tuesday evenings.

Divisions – Definitions & Debater Eligibility

- 2.06 The Annual Competition shall have 2 divisions:
 - (1) Junior / Intermediate Division (years 7 to 10 students)
 - (2) Senior Division (years 9 to 12 students).

Teams

- 2.07 Each team must have at least three students and not more than four students participating in each debate.
- 2.08 Where a team has four members, the fourth member shall not address the audience, other than to move the traditional "vote of thanks" at the conclusion of the debate.
- 2.09 School Co-ordinators are to provide IGSA with their team lists prior to the start of the competition.

- 2.10 If finals are held, a team member may not take part in the finals rounds of the annual competition unless they have previously debated at least three times for that team in that division during the preliminary rounds.

3 Organisation & Conduct of Debates During the Preliminary Rounds

School Co-ordinator Responsibilities

- 3.01 The School Co-ordinator shall ensure compliance with the provisions of this manual in the conduct of a round of the annual competition. Close reference should be made to this section (section 3), which is structured chronologically according to the tasks required and potential problems arising in the organisation of a debate during the preliminary rounds. **Please note that school co-ordinators are not permitted to coach girls or teams participating in the IGSA Invitational Debating Competition.**
- 3.02 The School Co-ordinator shall perform the following responsibilities but may, at their discretion, determine the manner in which the following tasks are undertaken, subject to the requirements of this manual:
- (1) Receive and print the topics on the morning of the round via email (from either the Convener or the Chief Adjudicator (see 7.11).
 - (2) Ensure, wherever possible, that events occur as close to the specified commencement time as possible (see 3.04).
 - (3) Where debaters are late, ensure that the Convener is contacted (see 3.06) and that the provisions of 3.09 are followed.
 - (4) Distribution of the topic as per 3.09, ensuring that your team has been issued with the correct scheduled topic for that round and that they understand which side (affirmative or negative) they will be debating (in the preliminary rounds, schools listed first in the draw are affirmative).
 - (5) Assignment of preparation rooms within the school premises as if they were debating at a host school. Students must be supervised to ensure that prohibited technology is not used and prohibited communication does not occur (see 3.19).
 - (6) Where there is a late arrival of an adjudicator, contact the Chief Adjudicator (as per 3.21) and assign an appropriate replacement (as per 3.22).
 - (7) The prompt return of relevant online forms to the tally keeper (see 3.03).
 - (8) Prompt communication with the Convener on the occurrence of any problems or incidents during the round.
- 3.01 Following the conclusion of a round of the annual competition, and no later than 12:00 pm of the next working day after the round was held, the Host School Co-ordinator shall:
- (1) Submit debate results via the online form to IGSA.
 - (2) Where appropriate, provide adjudicator feedback to the Chief Adjudicator by e-mail or via the online form (see 8.16).

Commencement Time

- 3.02 Subject to the delays and rescheduling considered by this manual, all debates of the annual competition:
- (1) The Junior / Intermediate Division shall commence their preparation time at 4:30 pm and debate at 5:15 pm;
 - (2) The Senior / Intermediate Division shall commence their preparation time at 5.30 pm and debates at 6:15 pm.

Late Arrival of Debaters

- 3.03 Debaters are expected to arrive in advance of their preparation time, as specified in 3.02.
- 3.04 If a team is not present at the scheduled time for their topic distribution, as specified in 3.02, the School Co-ordinator must contact both the other School Co-ordinator and the Convener.

- 3.05 If all members of a team have not arrived 15 minutes after their preparation time was due to begin, the Host School Coordinator, in consultation with the opposing School Co-ordinator and Convener, may:
- (1) Where only some members of a team are delayed, distribute the topic and begin preparation time on the understanding that the late team members will join their team in the preparation room upon their arrival
 - (2) Where both the Co-ordinators agree, reschedule the debate to an alternative time
 - (3) Where no alternative is available and none of the above can be agreed upon, the delayed team is considered to have forfeited the debate.
- 3.06 If neither team is ready to debate by the time specified in 3.04, then the debate shall be:
- (1) Rescheduled with the consent of the Convener and both school co-ordinators; or
 - (2) Deemed to be a mutual forfeit (neither team shall be awarded points for that round).

Distribution of Topics to Teams

- 3.07 At the time specified in 3.02 (or by 3.05 for a delayed time due to the late arrival of debaters), the School Co-ordinator may disclose the topics to team members.
- 3.08 The School Co-ordinator should provide a written copy of the topic to each team and should indicate whether the team is affirmative or negative.
- 3.09 In all debates in the preliminary rounds, the school listed first in the draw shall take the affirmative case.
- 3.10 Where a debate from the preliminary rounds is rescheduled, the school listed first in the original competition draw shall take the affirmative case.
- 3.11 The School Co-ordinator must:
- (1) Take care to ensure that a disclosure of topics does not result in premature disclosure to other debaters or coaches; and
 - (2) If topics are prematurely disclosed, inform the Convener.

Distribution of Incorrect Topic

- 3.12 If the preparation period has not commenced and it is discovered that the topic issued to the teams is different from the scheduled topic for that debate then the School Co-ordinator shall disclose the scheduled topic for that debate, according to rule 3.07.
- 3.13 If the preparation period has commenced and it is discovered that both teams have been issued with a topic which is different from the scheduled topic for that debate then:
- (1) The topic which was issued to the teams will become the topic for that debate;
 - (2) Both teams shall continue to prepare the topic that was issued; and
 - (3) Teams shall not have additional time to prepare using the correct topic.

Preparation Period

- 3.14 Subject to rules 3.07 (shortened preparation time due to late arrival of debaters) and 3.16 (altered preparation time due to preparation of incorrect side of topic), all teams:
- (1) Shall have 45 minutes preparation time;
 - (2) Shall be allocated a preparation room into which no mobile phones, portable computers other than the one being used for livestreaming the debate, smart devices (including watches and eyewear) or reference materials shall be brought, other than a dictionary (of comparable standard to the *Australian Oxford Dictionary*); and
 - (3) Shall not communicate with any person who is not a member of the same team (three or four students, as defined by 3.02) as is present at the distribution of the topic.

- 3.15 Should a team or individual(s) act in contravention of rule 3.14 by using the above prohibited technologies or materials, or communicating with a person external to their team, then the Host School Co-ordinator should:
- (1) Warn the team or individual(s) that their team may be penalised by loss of competition points or by disqualification from the competition;
 - (2) Remove any offending material, technology or person(s) from the preparation room;
 - (3) Allow the debate to go ahead as scheduled. The debate should not be abandoned;
 - (4) Following the debate, the Convener shall be informed of the incident as soon as possible. The Convener will investigate and take appropriate action.

Preparation of Incorrect Side

- 3.16 When one team prepares the incorrect side of a debate (for example, prepares the Affirmative Case when they are the Negative team):
- (1) A maximum of additional 30 minutes shall be allocated to both teams to prepare the correct side; and
 - (2) During that preparation time, assistance may not be given by teachers or coaches.

Speaking Times

- 3.17 Speaking times for the annual competition are:
- (1) Senior / Intermediate Division: 5 – 7 minutes (one bell at 5 minutes and two bells at 7 minutes).
 - (3) Junior / Intermediate Division: 4-6 minutes (one bell at 4 minutes and two bells at 6 minutes).
- 3.18 If any debater is speaking at 30 seconds after the time stated in rule 3.17, then a continuous bell shall be sounded. Continuous bells should therefore be sounded by the chairperson:
- (1) In Senior / Intermediate Division, at 7 minutes 30 seconds
 - (2) In Junior / Intermediate Division, at 6 minutes 30 seconds

Late Arrival of Adjudicators

- 3.19 If an adjudicator has not arrived at the scheduled commencement time for the debate, the first listed School Co-ordinator shall:
- (1) Contact the adjudicator to determine a reason for the absence; and
 - (2) Notify the Chief Adjudicator of their absence.
- 3.20 If an adjudicator has not arrived 10 minutes after the scheduled commencement time, the first listed School Co-ordinator shall contact the Chief Adjudicator to determine the most appropriate of the following courses of action:
- (1) Assign a replacement adjudicator, as arranged by the Chief Adjudicator;
 - (2) Where no replacement adjudicator is available, arrange for the coaches of both teams to adjudicate the debate, coming to a consensus decision;
 - (3) Where no replacement adjudicator is available and the coaches are unavailable or unwilling, arrange for two teachers with some debating experience from the opposing schools to adjudicate the debate, coming to a consensus decision;
 - (4) Where there is no suitable person available to adjudicate the debate as above, the debate may be rescheduled with the agreement of both Co-ordinators;
 - (5) Where there is no suitable person available to adjudicate the debate as above and rescheduling the debate is not possible, the debate will be deemed a non-result (see 5.05).
- 3.21 Where a replacement adjudicator is appointed under rule 3.22:
- (1) If both people are unable to agree on the outcome of the debate within a reasonable amount of time, then the debate shall be:

- (a) Rescheduled with the consent of both school co-ordinators; or
 - (b) Deemed to be a non-result (see 5.05).
- (2) Where a consensus decision is reached by the two people appointed as replacement adjudicators, only one person shall deliver the adjudication
 - (3) A person appointed as a replacement adjudicator under 3.22 cannot seek remuneration from the Host School or from the IGSA Invitational Debating Competition.

4 Changes to the Scheduled Preliminary Round Debates

Forfeiture

- 4.01 A forfeiting team shall communicate its intention to forfeit through its School Coordinator:
 - (1) By telephoning or emailing the opposing School Co-ordinator
 - (2) By telephoning or emailing the Convener
 - (3) By telephoning or emailing the Chief Adjudicator.
- 4.02 When a team forfeits a debate within 24 hours of the debate, the Co-ordinator of the forfeiting school must contact the Chief Adjudicator by telephone as soon as possible to ensure that the adjudicator expecting to adjudicate the now forfeited debate is given timely notice.
- 4.03 The Co-ordinator of the forfeiting school shall also notify the Tally Keeper of the forfeit via email.
- 4.04 Every effort should be made to avoid forfeiting debates.
- 4.05 A team shall win a debate by forfeit when:
 - (1) An opposing team withdraws from the set debate with more than 24 hours notice and no alternative date and time can be mutually agreed upon
 - (2) An opposing team withdraws from the set debate with less than 24 hours notice; or members of a team are not present at the specified preparation time, subject to rule 3.02.

Rescheduling Debates – Varying Date, Time and / or Venue

- 4.06 The date, time and venue for a debate in the preliminary rounds of the annual competition may be altered:
 - (1) Prior to the scheduled commencement time, with the consent of both school co-ordinators involved and the Convener; or
 - (2) By a resolution at an IGSA Invitational general meeting, following approval by IGSA.
- 4.07 If the date, time and venue for a debate in the preliminary rounds of the annual competition has been altered according to rule 4.06 then:
 - (1) The Opposing School Co-ordinator
 - (2) The Convener
 - (3) The Chief Adjudicator; and
 - (4) The Tally Keepermust all be informed of the change.

5 Scoring of the Preliminary Rounds & Determination of Finals

Storage of Results

- 5.01 The tally keeper shall maintain a secure record of the competition point score or tally (as described below) of each school in each division.

Competition Points

- 5.02 In a debate in the preliminary rounds of the annual competition:
 - (1) A team which wins a debate shall receive 3 competition points

- (2) A team which loses a debate shall receive 1 competition point, except if the team lost by forfeit; and
 - (3) A team which forfeits a debate shall receive 0 competition points.
- 5.03 Where a team wins a debate, the margin by which they won the debate shall be recorded on the tally and aggregated with their other winning margins for the purpose of 5.13.
- 5.04 Where a team is not scheduled to debate in a preliminary round because they have a bye, the 'bye' should be indicated on the tally in the record for that week.
- 5.05 If the result of a debate in the preliminary rounds of the annual competition is deemed to be a non-result then:
- (1) Both teams shall receive 2 competition points; or
 - (2) If both teams forfeited the debate or were unable to debate, then both teams shall receive 0 competition points.

Publication of Results

- 5.06 The tally keeper shall make the tallies available in tabular form to all members' schools:
- (1) Preferably, after the completion of every round; but
 - (2) At least after the completion of every second round; and
 - (3) After the completion of the second last preliminary round; and
 - (4) At the completion of the preliminary rounds.
- 5.07 The tally keeper shall transmit a comprehensive set of results in tabular form to all members' school no later than 5 working days after the conclusion of the annual competition.

Qualification of Teams for the Finals

- 5.08 At the conclusion of the preliminary rounds of the annual competition, the two highest scoring teams in each division qualify for the Grand Final.
- 5.09 In the event that teams in one division are on equal competition points, where the two highest scoring teams cannot be determined, such a distinction shall be made on the basis of which team has the higher total margin score aggregated from the preliminary rounds and has therefore won their debates by the larger margins, considered as a whole.
- 5.10 Where it is not possible to distinguish between teams as per 5.09 because two teams have the same aggregated margin score from their winning debates,
- 5.11 Where it is not possible to distinguish between teams as per 5.10. Because points and margins are equal, teams will compete in tie-breaker debates to determine final positions.

6 Conduct of the Grand Final

The Grand Final of the annual competition shall be conducted in the same manner as the preliminary rounds, with the exception that they will be face to face debates, not virtual.

Date, Time and Venue

- 6.01 The IGSA Invitational Debating Competition Grand Final for each division will be held at the same time and location as the Archdale Shield Grand Finals.
- 6.02 Teams who qualify for the Grand Final are expected to attend in person debates.
- 6.03 All members of a team taking part in the final rounds for a particular division must have previously debated at least three times in the preliminary rounds in that division, unless the Convener is satisfied that special circumstances exist.

Eligibility of Debaters to Participate in the Finals

- 6.04 All members of a team taking part in the final rounds for a particular division must have previously debated at least three times in the preliminary rounds in that division, unless the Convener is satisfied that special circumstances exist.

Adjudication

- 6.05 Where the outcome of a debate in the final rounds is determined by a panel of adjudicators, each member of that panel shall make an independent adjudication and forward their decision to the chairperson; the team with the greater number of nominations shall be deemed the winner.

7 Topics to be Debated Through the Competition

Principles

- 7.01 The topics debated in the annual competition should seek to achieve the following purposes:
- (1) To educate debaters in the range of rhetorical techniques which are available to them
 - (2) To encourage the development of an awareness of current affairs and other information
 - (3) To cultivate the sensitive and appropriate discussion of a wide range of issues
 - (4) To engage debaters in areas of interest to them
 - (5) To provide an opportunity for debaters to entertain, inspire and persuade their audience.
- 7.02 The standard of a topic shall be such as to provide a sufficient challenge to all teams to which it is allocated.

Topics Formulation

- 7.03 Each member school is required to supply ten (10) suggested topics to the Chief Adjudicator before the annual pre-season meeting. While school coordinators are encouraged to seek out suggestions from their coaching staff, it is their responsibility to advise on the age appropriateness of the subject matter of suggested topics.
- 7.04 The discretion and responsibility for the wording and form of topics set in any given week lies jointly with the Convener and Chief Adjudicator.

Access to Topics

- 7.05 Only the Convener and Chief Adjudicator shall have knowledge of topics prior to their distribution.
- 7.06 If a School Co-ordinator has reason to believe that the secrecy of a topic has been in any way compromised, the Convener should be contacted immediately.

Topic Areas

- 7.07 The Convener shall distribute a list of topic areas that indicate a theme or area of subject matter for the topics in each week of the annual competition.
- 7.08 The topic area is only intended to assist the debaters in the accumulation of matter prior to the formal preparation period. The listed topic area should not change the way debaters interpret a topic or prepare their case for the topic.
- 7.09 Topic Areas will be distributed to debaters by their School Co-ordinators.

Distribution of Topics to Member Schools

- 7.10 Topics shall be distributed by either the Convener or the Chief Adjudicator by e-mail however:
- (1) The topics will only be sent to the School Co-ordinator hosting debates in that round; and
 - (2) The email will not be sent more than 24 hours before the debate. Usually, the topics will be distributed via email on the morning of the debate.

Replacement Topics

- 7.11 If the Convener is of the opinion that the secrecy of any topic(s) has been compromised, they may, at their discretion:
- (1) Select a reasonable topic; and / or
 - (2) Recommend that disciplinary action be taken under section 14 of this manual.

8 Adjudicators

Introductory

- 8.01 The Chief Adjudicator shall be responsible for selecting the adjudicators engaged throughout the competition.
- 8.02 One adjudicator shall be assigned to each annual competition debate, with the exception of the final rounds where there may be three adjudicators assigned.

Function – Oral Adjudication and Feedback

- 8.03 The adjudicator shall deliver a formal adjudication at the conclusion of the debate, no longer than the speaking time allowed to debaters in that debate for an individual speech.
- 8.04 The adjudicator may also give the debaters brief additional advice and feedback at the conclusion of the formal adjudication, if she / he thinks it appropriate in the circumstances.
- 8.05 The purpose of the formal adjudication is:
- (1) To explain the outcome of a particular debate
 - (2) To assist debaters in understanding how developments in their own debating may lead them to win debates in the future
 - (3) To educate the audience as to the criteria used for determining the outcome of a debate, and how these were satisfied in the instant case.
- 8.06 In the case of a decision given by a panel of three adjudicators, the winning team should be announced, along with whether that adjudication was a unanimous or split decision by the adjudicators.
- 8.07 An adjudicator shall complete an Adjudication Sheet that provides a brief summary of the comments made to the audience and an assessment of each team's performance.
- 8.08 The adjudicator's comments should be constructive, helpful and encouraging.
- 8.09 Following the conclusion of a round of the annual competition, and no later than 12:00 pm of the next working day after the round was held, the Host School Co-ordinator shall:
- (1) Submit debate results via the online form to IGSA
 - (2) Where appropriate, provide adjudicator feedback to the Chief Adjudicator by e-mail or via the online form (see 8.07).

Applicable Principles

- 8.10 The applicable principles for adjudicating debates should be explained to the adjudicators at a training workshop convened by the Chief Adjudicator prior to the annual competition.
- 8.11 Adjudicators shall, at all times, act fairly and professionally, without pre-judging the speakers, school, arguments or case line involved in a debate.
- 8.12 In determining the performance of a debater relative to others in a debate, the adjudicator should consider the matter, manner and method of each speaker and how each of those aspects impacts upon the persuasiveness of the speech.
- 8.13 Adjudicators should refer to the 'Guidelines for Scoring Debates' in determining the score to be assigned to each debater (see Part VI).
- 8.14 In no circumstances shall an adjudicator disclose the score assigned to a debater or to a team.

Dress Standards

- 8.15 An adjudicator is expected to dress appropriately, bearing in mind the perceived importance of his / her position in the eyes of the debaters and audience.

Review of Performance

- 8.16 Whenever appropriate, a school co-ordinator shall be encouraged to submit feedback on the performance of adjudicators to the Chief Adjudicator.

- 8.17 Feedback on adjudicators may be transmitted to the Chief Adjudicator via email or submitted via an online form.
- 8.18 Any adjudicator feedback should include:
- (1) The name of the adjudicator
 - (2) The round, division and venue
 - (3) The name and position of the person completing the feedback
 - (4) Comments on the technical knowledge, presentation skills and organisation displayed in the formal adjudication and in additional advice provided to debaters.
- 8.19 The Chief Adjudicator should seek to implement feedback on adjudicators in one or more of the following ways:
- (1) Bring any issues to the attention of the adjudicator and attempt to advise them on how to improve their adjudicating skill or communication
 - (2) Consider the feedback when determining which division it is appropriate for that adjudicator to adjudicate in the future
 - (3) Consider the feedback when selecting adjudicators for the annual competition in future years.

Finality

- 8.20 The adjudicator's decision is final and will not be reversed under any circumstances.
- 8.21 Audience members, coaches and co-ordinators are free to discuss debates with adjudicators in an effort to better understand the adjudicator's decision. However, abuse, belligerence or intimidation directed towards adjudicators is unacceptable. Disagreement with the adjudicator's decision should be addressed by the feedback procedures outlined at 8.16.

Adjudicator's Pay

- 8.22 Adjudicators shall be paid by IGSA on behalf of its members' school.
- 8.23 Payment will be transmitted by EFT and adjudicators are advised to provide IGSA with bank details and notify IGSA should bank details change.

PART IV: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

9 Executive Committee

Composition

- 9.01 A member of the Executive shall be:
- (1) A school co-ordinator; or
 - (2) Any other person appointed to fulfil one of the roles listed in 10.02.
- 9.02 The Executive consists of:
- (1) The Convener
 - (2) The Secretary
 - (3) IGSA Executive Officer; and
 - (4) The Chief Adjudicator(s).
- 9.03 Each members' school is required to send a representative to the general meetings from which the Executive will be formed.

Duties

- 9.04 The members of the Executive shall have the following duties:
- (1) The **Convener** is the chair and Convener of meetings. S/he is responsible for supervising the proper operation of the competition. S/he may be delegated other tasks, subject to approval by IGSA. The Convener shall ensure that other members of the Executive are performing their duties competently.

- (2) The **Secretary** is responsible for ensuring that a proper record is kept of all duly convened meetings of the competition and its sub-committees, and forwarding minutes of meetings to members' school.
- (3) The **IGSA Executive Officer** is the IGSA staff member responsible for overseeing the IGSA Invitational Competition and as such oversees the appointment of Committee Members and attends all meetings where possible. Responsible for appointing the tally keeper who ensures the responsible collection of results for each round, maintaining and publishing up-to-date scores and preparing a draw for the following year of the Annual Competition in accordance with rules 2.03-2.11.
- (4) The **Chief Adjudicator** is responsible for selecting, screening, training and allocating adjudicators and developing, promulgating and monitoring standards. The Chief Adjudicator is also responsible for assisting the topics committee in the suggestion, formulation and refinement of topics.

9.05 Where the organisational roles of the Convener and Chief Adjudicator overlap, a division of responsibilities may be agreed upon between the Convener and Chief Adjudicator, subject to approval by IGSA.

Power of Delegation

- 9.06 In matters which concern the smooth conduct of a competition, the Executive may delegate such of its powers to one or more School Co-ordinators or Committees as it sees fit.
- 9.07 The Convener shall act as a liaison between the members' school and the Executive, and a supervisor of the delegated task.

Sub-Committees

- 9.08 The Convener is an ex-officio member of each sub-committee.
- 9.09 The Executive may establish sub-committees as it sees fit, subject to approval by IGSA.

10 Meetings

Chair and Convener

- 10.01 Subject to rule 11.02, the Convener is the chair and Convener of meetings.
- 10.02 If the Convener is not present at a meeting, then those present may choose its chair:
- (1) From the attending members of the Executive; or
 - (2) From amongst the attending School Co-ordinators.

Notice of Meetings

- 10.03 Notice of any meeting shall be communicated:
- (1) By the Convener:
 - (a) At least 7 calendar days before the proposed date of the meeting; and
 - (b) Sent to School Co-ordinators, an IGSA Executive Board Member and the Executive Officer of IGSA; or
 - (2) By any five School Co-ordinators, should the Convener be unable to hold or refuse to hold the Meeting:
 - (a) At least 14 calendar days before the proposed date of the meeting; and
 - (b) By facsimile or by post addressed to the remaining School Co-ordinators, an IGSA Executive Board Member and the Executive Officer of IGSA.

10.04 Notice of any Meeting shall include a draft agenda.

General Meeting

10.05 The general meeting shall be held no later than two weeks prior to the commencement of the annual competition.

End of Season Review Meeting

- 10.06 The review meeting is a meeting to review the operation of the IGSA Invitational Debating Competition, and is to be held no later than 8 weeks after the grand final of the annual competition.
- 10.07 The agenda of the review meeting shall include items relating to:
- (1) The performance of adjudicators
 - (2) The selection of topics
 - (3) The appropriateness of venues
 - (4) The adequacy of existing policy and practices
 - (5) A review of the proposed draw for the next year's annual competition
 - (6) A review of this manual for the purpose of providing recommendations to IGSA.

Place and Time of Meetings

- 10.08 Wherever possible, meetings shall be held at a central location and at a convenient time to school co-ordinators.

PART V: MISCELLANEOUS

11 Definitions

- 11.01 The following words have these meanings in this Manual unless a contrary intention appears:

IGSA means the Association of Heads of Independent Girls' Schools NSW trading as Independent Girls' School Association (**IGSA**).

IGSA Executive means the Executive Board of the Association of Heads of Independent Girls' Schools NSW trading as Independent Girls' School Association (**IGSA**).

IGSA Executive Officer means the person appointed by IGSA to hold the position of Executive Officer.

Convener means the IGSA Invitational Debating Competition Convener.

Executive means the Executive Committee of the IGSA Invitational Debating Competition.

Final Rounds means debates held after the conclusion of the Preliminary Rounds of the Annual Competition, and may include Tie Breakers, Quarter Finals, Semi-Finals and Grand Finals.

General Meeting means the meeting called in accordance with rule 11.05.

Groups means a division of Member Schools for the purpose of the Annual Competition in accordance with rule 2.07.

Matter, Manner and Method have the meanings accorded them in the relevant parts of the most recent edition of *Taking the Initiative* (published by the NSW Department of Education and Training).

Members' School means a school whose Principal is a member of IGSA.

Qualifying Score means the number of Competition Points required by a team to qualify for the Final Rounds of the Annual Competition.

Review Meeting means the meeting called at the end of the season in accordance with rule 11.06.

School Co-ordinator means the duly appointed representative of a Member School.

Selected Teams means the teams which qualify for the Final Rounds.

Student means a girl who is currently enrolled and registered by a Member School.

Subscription Fees means the membership fees determined by IGSA.

Topic has the meaning given by rule 7.01.

12 Dispute Resolution

Dispute Resolution Procedure

- 12.01 IGSA encourages parties to resolve minor disputes quickly, informally and constructively. A simple verbal exchange, made in good faith, may be sufficient to clarify an area of potential disagreement.
- 12.02 Where a quick verbal resolution is not possible, or where the dispute is of a more serious nature, possibly involving a breach of the Code of Conduct outlined in Section 15, the following dispute resolution procedure will be observed:
- (1) The aggrieved person or school will state their grievance in writing to the Co-ordinator of the offending school
 - (2) The Co-ordinator of the offending school will respond in writing to the complaint within 48 hours of its receipt
 - (3) Both parties shall attempt to resolve the dispute constructively
 - (4) If the dispute cannot be resolved, both parties will present their case verbally and/or in writing to the Convener and the IGSA Executive Officer
 - (5) If the Convener and the IGSA Executive Officer are unable to resolve the matter, they may refer it to the IGSA Executive, whose decision will be final
 - (6) If the Convener and the IGSA Executive Officer are able to resolve the matter to their satisfaction but one or both parties to the dispute disagree with their decision, the dissatisfied party or parties will have the right of appeal to the IGSA Executive, whose decision will be final.

13 Disciplinary Action

Introductory

- 13.01 For the purposes of this section, the rules governing the competition include the Code of Conduct in Section 15 of this manual.

Scope of Disciplinary Powers

- 13.02 The IGSA Executive may:
- (1) Disqualify a members' school or team from participation in any competition conducted by the IGSA Invitational Debating Competition
 - (2) Impose a tally penalty upon any team
 - (3) Require that the members' school promptly explain the actions of a team, School Co-ordinator, or coach by whom it is represented; or
 - (4) Take any other legitimate action it considers appropriate.

Against a Team

- 13.03 If the IGSA Executive is of the opinion that a team has acted in contravention of the rules governing a competition, then the IGSA Executive may:
- (1) Disqualify it from participation in any competition conducted by IGSA
 - (2) Impose a tally penalty
 - (3) Require that the team attend a training session; or
 - (4) Take any other legitimate action it considers appropriate.

Against a Coach, Adjudicator or School Co-ordinator

- 13.04 If the IGSA Executive is of the opinion that a coach, adjudicator or School Co-ordinator has acted in a manner inconsistent with this Manual, then the IGSA Executive may:
- (1) Request that the person promptly explain his / her actions
 - (2) In the case of an adjudicator or coach

- (a) Require that the person attend an additional training session
- (b) Remove that person from the list of accredited adjudicators or coaches; or
- (3) Take any other legitimate action it considers appropriate.

Against a Spectator

- 13.05 In rule 13.06, “spectator” includes an audience member, chairperson or any other person present during the course of the debate.
- 13.06 If a spectator acts, in the debating room, or its environs, in such a way as to audibly call into question the reputation of an adjudicator, or the integrity of an adjudication or the annual competition, then the Host School Co-ordinator shall:
- (1) Forthwith warn that person that the team which that person supports may be disqualified should another such incident be recorded
 - (2) Indicate to the spectator the proper procedure for registering a grievance against an adjudicator, coach, etc.;
 - (3) Advise the Convener by telephone within 48 hours of the incident.

14 Code of Conduct

Principles

- 14.01 Debating is a valuable activity which encourages the development of many skills, attributes and qualities.
- 14.02 Participating in a debate is more important than winning.
- 14.03 Debaters, spectators, coaches and others must always consider their actions and question whether their behaviour may bring their school, their team or themselves into disrepute.

Conduct

- 14.04 Debaters, spectators and coaches must show respect for the opposing team and the Adjudicator and refrain from conduct that may be offensive, upsetting, damaging, intimidating or insulting.
- 14.05 Participants in the IGSA Invitational Debating Competition must act in accordance with the policy on harassment.
- 14.06 Debaters and their coaches must behave ethically and with integrity. Specifically, debaters and coaches must not seek to gain an advantage from information intended for, but not presently available to, their opponents.

PART VI: GUIDELINES FOR VIRTUAL DEBATES

Virtual Adjudicators

All Adjudicators for the invitational competition will be virtual.

Paperwork

Paperwork will also be virtual. Adjudicators will complete an online form for student feedback and results which will be sent to coordinators each week from IGSA.

Prior To The Competition Commencement

Prior to the season commencing it is recommended that you check with your IT department as to whether there will be any issues accessing an externally provided Zoom link (firewall issues).

Topics

Topics will be sent to both school coordinators each week.

Preparation

Prep should be facilitated like normal for both teams, for 45 minutes in a room with only the 4 permitted students, after which time they will come together in one room for the debate. You should arrange for a laptop or computer for the virtual adjudicator and opposing team to be viewed from and have the room set-

up so that the adjudicator can clearly see and hear the speakers. During these debates the adjudicator will also chair the debate.

I encourage schools to join the Zoom link and be 'waiting in the lobby' prior to the debate start time (while students are in prep) – this ensures that any issues are identified with time to rectify them.

Technical Difficulties

It is recommended that you have spare laptops/iPads/tablets on hand to troubleshoot if necessary – often 'Staff' devices can bypass any issues, but students' devices are locked down.

After 15 minutes, should there continue to be technical difficulties, the team should dial into the Zoom meeting for Audio (not ideal, but better than forfeiting) i.e. they will be heard but not visually seen. If this option fails, revert to the process for when an adjudicator does not show (3.24(3) - Page 8).

Adjudicator Conduct

The Adjudicator will chair all virtual debates. Their camera should be on and they are expected to be taking notes, visually acknowledging speakers as if it were a face to face debate.

The Adjudicator must NOT be visibly conducting the call from their bedroom. IGSA suggests the use of a plain white Zoom Virtual background or other non-distracting virtual background.

Spectators

No parent spectators are permitted to join virtual debates via the link, each school can decide whether they allow parent spectators onsite during virtual debates to watch in the same room and this should be communicated by the host school to the visiting school the week prior.

Risk Mitigation

The risk warning has been updated, commenting on virtual debating. Please ensure that this is shared with the relevant stakeholders and on display at your school.

Each individual school should complete their own risk assessment of this activity.

FAQs – Specific to Virtual Debates

The Zoom link provided is not working

Coordinators are recommended to try the links while their teams are in prep. If you discover that a link is not working, call the adjudicator to troubleshoot, then the Convenor if the issue persists or you cannot make contact with the adjudicator.

The adjudicator is not there / hasn't started the debate

Adjudicators will be asked to arrive onto the call 15 minutes beforehand. If you cannot see them, text/call them first, if no response, text/call the Convenor. If for some reason they do not end up arriving, the coach of the school listed first on the draw should adjudicate the debate.

The adjudicator has dropped out

Call/text the adjudicator to try and work out the issue, they will likely just reconnect. If connection is lost during a speaker's speech, recommence the speech from the last point made. If the adjudicator cannot reconnect, the coach from the school listed first on the draw will adjudicate the debate.

We can't hear the other team

In the first instance, use the chat function and / or hands up function to try and get the attention of the adjudicator. If that fails, coordinator to message / call the adjudicator. If that fails, dial into the Zoom meeting for audio and mention at what point you lost audio so the debate can continue from that point.

It's been 15 minutes and we can't still get the debate to work

After following the steps previously mentioned, if after 15 minutes you are still experiencing difficulties, the teams should call into the Zoom meeting and just proceed as normal without the visual component of the debate.

Chairperson's Script & Instructions

(Not required for virtual debates or debates with virtual adjudicators)

I welcome you to the _____round of the IGSA Invitational Debating competition.

This debate is between _____ and _____

The affirmative team, from _____is

1st speaker _____

2nd speaker _____

3rd speaker _____

The negative team from _____ is

1st speaker _____

2nd speaker _____

3rd speaker _____

The adjudicator for this debate is _____

Each speaker may speak for (*see below). There will be a single warning bell at ____ minutes, two bells at _____ minutes to indicate that the speaker's time has expired. A bell will be rung continuously if a speaker exceeds the maximum time by more than one minute.

For debaters planning on using their phone to time their speech, please ensure that it is switched to flight mode during the debate.

The topic for this debate is: (also write it on the board)

The 1st Affirmative Speaker will begin the debate.

The 1st Negative Speaker will now begin the Negative Team's case.

The 2nd Affirmative Speaker will continue her team's case.

The 2nd Negative Speaker will continue her team's case.

The 3rd Affirmative Speaker will conclude her team's case.

The 3rd Negative Speaker will conclude the debate.

(Wait for the adjudicator to signal that they are ready)

The Adjudicator, will now deliver the adjudication and announce the result of this debate.

A team member of _____ will now congratulate _____.

A team member of the winning team will now respond.

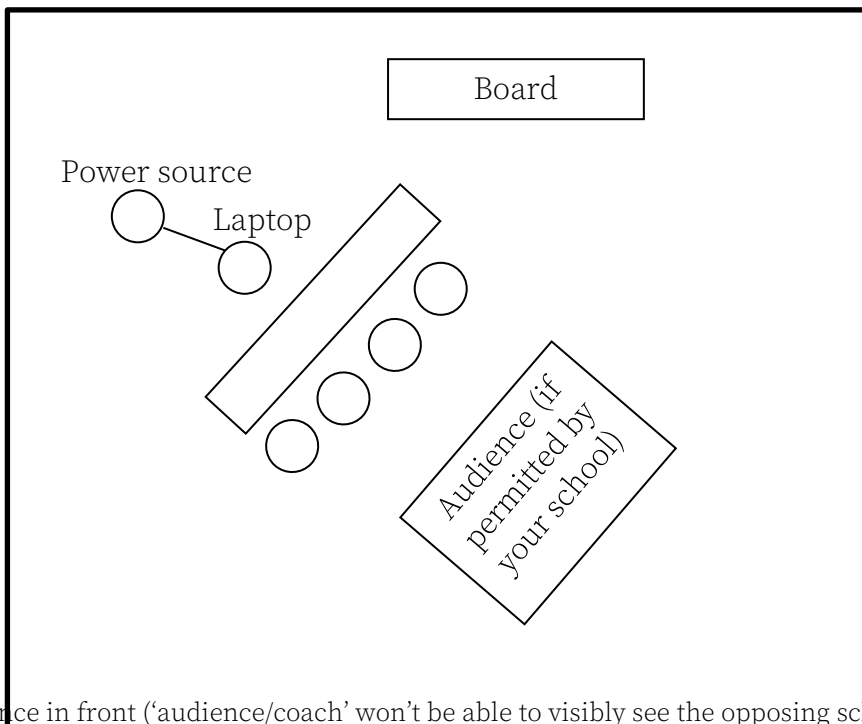
Timekeeper - Speaking times

Teams	One Bell	Two Bells	Continuous Bell
Seniors	5 minutes	7 minutes	7 minutes 30 seconds
Intermediate	5 minutes	7 minutes	7 minutes 30 seconds
Juniors	3 minutes	4 minutes	4 minutes 30 seconds

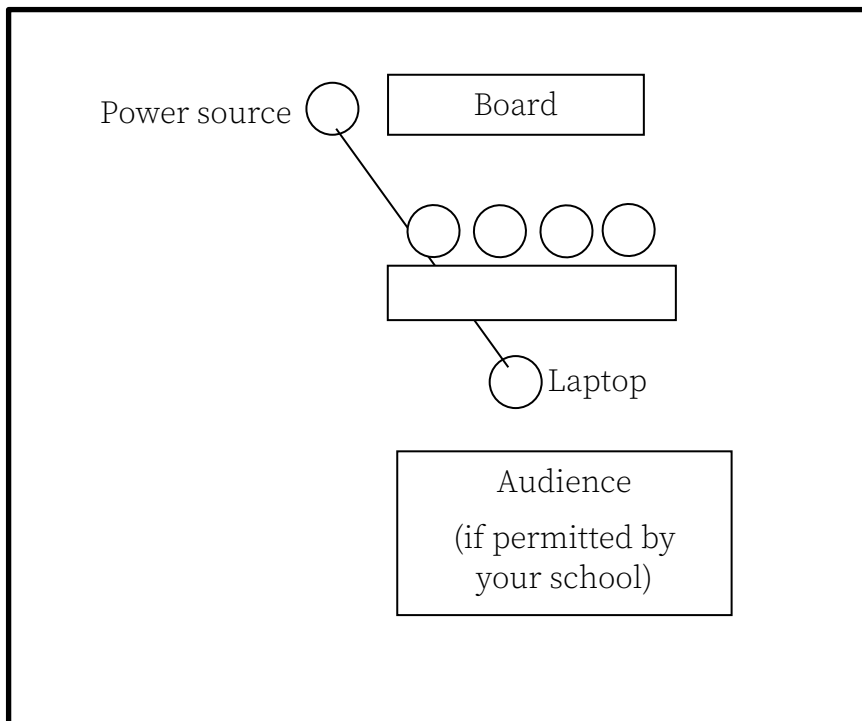
Setting up the room for Virtual Debates

Don't feel you have to set-up in the traditional debate format. Ensure that the laptop is plugged into a power source and that all boys can be seen first and foremost.

e.g., Audience behind the laptop



OR Audience in front ('audience/coach' won't be able to visibly see the opposing school)



Troubleshooting / Helpful tips for Virtual Debating

Before the debate

- Update the Zoom app – in the desktop app click your profile picture/initials in the top righthand corner, click check for updates, you want to be running version 5
- Ensure that your laptop is on and fully charged/plugged into a source of power – set the debate up near the charger in the room (see above)
- Click the Zoom link to make sure it works. You should see the *message 'waiting for the host to begin the meeting'*

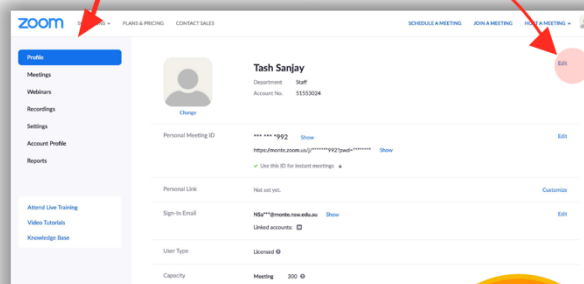
Naming convention

- For each debate, the naming convention for the team should be 'TEAM_SCHOOL_SIDE OF THE DEBATE' e.g. 7A_Scots_Affirmative

Changing your profile name on Zoom

Make sure you are on the Zoom Web App

Login to the Zoom Website and click the **Profile Icon** then next to your name click **Edit**



Naming Convention
TEAM_SCHOOL_
SIDE OF TOPIC
e.g.
7B_Monte_Affirmative

Troubleshooting

1. **Restart the computer.** Then retry joining the call via link to the Zoom application.
2. **Using the browser version of Zoom.** If the problem persists, click the Zoom link, then click "cancel" when prompted to open the application). Opt to use the browser version instead. This should fix the issue.

PART VII: OFFICIAL FORMS

Many of these forms are now available online. Hard copies are included for your reference and use if you wish. However, links to the online forms are available via the relevant hyperlink.

School Coordinator Master Result Sheet [2026 Archdale Coordinator Record of Results – Fill out form](#)

Adjudicator Decision Sheet [2026 Archdale Adjudicator Ballot – Fill out form](#)

Guidelines For Scoring Debates

Igsa Archdale Representative Team Recommendation Form

[2026 Archdale Representative Nomination – Fill out form](#)

Basic Chairperson and Timekeeper Script

Archdale Team lists [2026 Archdale Team Lists – Fill out form](#)

IGSA Invitational Debating Competition

Master Result Sheet

VENUE: _____

ROUND: _____

SCHOOLS COMPETING: _____

	Winning School	Losing School	Margin	Adjudicator (Name & Signature)
Senior / Intermediate				
Junior / Intermediate				

Please ensure that you have:

- * Using the Decision Sheets, checked that the winner is recorded correctly
- * Using the Decision Sheets, checked that the margin is recorded correctly
- * Where there has been a **Forfeit**, write 'forfeit' in the Winning School box and record the winner as the school that 'won' the debate (i.e. did **not** forfeit)

Host Coordinator's Signature: _____

PLEASE EMAIL RESULTS SHEET PROMPTLY TO IGSA OFFICE-

Email – info@igsa.nsw.edu.au

Phone 9888 9477

Guidelines for Scoring Debates:

Overall Debate Margins is an independent score after weighing up the quality and persuasiveness of a speech as a whole, judged against the **AVERAGE OF THAT DIVISION.**

Score	General Characteristics of the Debate
5	<p>Clear Win</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The winning side exceeded the expectation of their division, sophisticatedly addressing all major themes of the debate, while also identifying their relative importance• Offered debate-winning analysis in rebuttal and/or argumentation
3 - 4	<p>Close but clear debate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Both sides addressed major themes of the debate, while also identifying their relative importance• The winning side, however, identified the most important themes of the debate and were more persuasive in their presentation and argumentation of these
1 - 2	<p>Very close debate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Both sides addressed major themes of the debate, while also identifying their relative importance• In weighing up the key clashes of the debate, while nearly falling evenly between the two teams, the winning side were more persuasive in their presentation and argumentation of the major issue/theme of the debate

NOTES