

Adjudication of MUNA debating teams

Participation in MUNA is intended to be a rewarding and educational experience for every team member, and an opportunity for all those taking part to develop their skills as debaters. The sessions are designed to enable each participant to practice public speaking skills, to contribute as a member of a debating team and to learn about the procedures of formal debate in a situation that replicates 'real world' debating as far as possible.

A feature of all debating is that there is no single optimal approach which guarantees 'success'. Debates in democratic institutions of governance are opportunities to persuade others to your point of view. There are many aspects of being persuasive, including credibility of arguments, their logical consistency, fluency and eloquence, teamwork, understanding of the institutional rules of debate, and capacity to find constructive solutions through understanding of the points of view of others, whether they are adversaries or supporters.

Each listener hears every speech, every argument, every speaker from their own unique perspective, and will make judgements about all aspects of what is presented in a debate from that unique perspective. The performance of debaters and debating teams can only be assessed by the exercise of judgements about the overall contribution of each team, including content, presentation and methods of argument.

To ensure a balance of views in the adjudication of the debating in the course of the MUNA weekend, we have amassed an impressive panel of students, architects, lawyers, members of rostrum, government officials, rotarians and volunteers.

You will see different adjudicators at each session. Their judgements are combined to obtain a consensus view about which teams produce the best overall debating performances throughout the weekend and which team is most deserving of an encouragement award. Inevitably, some people will have views that are different from the collective consensus view of the adjudicators.

Adjudicators will focus on three primary areas, content, presentation and engagement.

Content - this includes demonstration of research; consistency and a logical development of persuasive arguments; and the recognition of your position vis-a-vis other delegations, and will consider relevance of arguments, depth of research / knowledge, and recognition of other delegates positions.

Presentation – examines clarity / lucidity / presence (engage with delegates rather than your notes or device). It also includes an assessment of the variation in tone and volume to provide emphasis and to capture delegates' attention. Adjudicators will consider lucidity, presence / engagement, and effective use of available time.

Engagement - you need to be in it to win it; adjudicators will examine involvement in the debates and the caucusing with other delegations. Your aim is to advance the prospects of a successful outcome from your country's standpoint in the vote on the resolution. The more you engage the better your prospects.

The adjudicators will also endeavour to provide feedback from time to time during the weekend to add to the learning experience and assist all teams to give of their best throughout the debating sessions.

Time management is also critical - allow time to state your key aims at the outset; expand with clear arguments and conclude with a summary.

In all your dealings:

- make the most of your opportunities;
- do your best to represent the position your country would be expected to take;
- remember that a few compelling points made persuasively will advance your position better than a dump of relevant but ill-sequenced arguments; and
- show respect for other delegates, delegations, the institution of the United Nations and the role of the Secretary-General

You will be debating 6 resolutions. Your performance will be assessed for each but time may not allow all delegations to speak to every resolution. Be assured that the way we roll up performances by teams for each resolution recognises this fact. But ensure that you are heard when it is expected.

Experience has shown that the quality of debate improves over the weekend. Adjudicators cannot compensate for this but you can by remaining engaged throughout the proceedings. A strong performance on Sunday can offset teething issues at the start. Listen, learn and benefit.

The Totenhofer Peace Prize

The Totenhofer Peace Prize is presented each year to the delegation participating in MUNA which makes the best contribution to world peace. We seek to clearly distinguish the Totenhofer Peace Prize from the other debate awards, which are intended to recognise the most competent debaters in the debating sessions and are judged according to standard debating criteria.

The Totenhofer Peace Prize is awarded to the team that throughout MUNA has contributed to world peace most consistently throughout the MUNA sessions. The advancement of world peace will be considered to be demonstrated through the building of positions which allow the General Assembly to achieve the broadest possible base of support for the resolutions which it debates, or the broadest possible base for rejection of resolutions which are considered inimical to world peace. Delegations can demonstrate their influence in favour of world peace by:

- Displaying negotiating skill in ensuring that the resolutions which are debated are ones which advance world peace, either in their selection or by advancing proposals that resolutions be amended which make them more amenable to a broader number of members;
- Displaying negotiating skill within and between blocs to ensure that the points most likely to generate consensus are put most strongly and are most fully developed;

- Displaying their own skill during debates in advancing and developing such points at a substantive level – less attention will be paid to style of delivery in judging the Totenhofer Peace Prize.

The judging of the Totenhofer Peace Prize will be undertaken across all sessions over the entire weekend.