NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ETHICS BOWL

Program Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines for 2019-2020
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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Hello, and welcome to the 2019-2020 Ethics Bowl season!

My name is Alex Richardson, and I'm the new Director of the National High School Ethics Bowl, based at UNC's Parr Center for Ethics. I couldn't be more excited to be kicking off my first season in this role, and can't wait to see what organizers, teachers, volunteers, and most importantly, students bring to the table in competition this year!

The National High School Ethics Bowl is an extraordinary program, and is among the Parr Center's top annual priorities. This is due not only to its size (the program currently serves thousands of students from over 300 schools nationwide!), but to its broader social import. We live in a society characterized by disagreement over not just the sometimes silly political stuff, but some of our most fundamental beliefs, judgments, and values. In order for a democratic society to function well, its citizens must be able to reflect on, discuss, and, yes, vigorously disagree about these values in a way that is respectful, civil, and productive. It is these skills which the NHSEB aims to foster in the students it serves. Our students, after all, are the inheritors and future leaders of our society. Given what I have seen and heard from them in my past experiences with high school ethics bowl, I, for one, am very confident that our democracy will be in good hands.

The NHSEB's mission and a lot of the rules and procedures you'll find in the following pages are not new to many of you, but I suspect that some of the things you'll see in the coming year will be. As I learn more about all corners of the program and continue the work of improving it, I will look to you—organizers, teachers, volunteers, and, yes, students too—for input and feedback on the process. I'll be sending out official surveys for each constituency over the course of the season to collect your impressions and suggestions. However, in the meantime, or, really, at any time, please don't hesitate to contact me at ethicsbowl@unc.edu with any questions, suggestions, or problems I can help solve. I look forward to meeting many of you this year, and to sharing and celebrating this wonderful program's continued success with all of you!

Excitedly yours,

Alex Richardson
Director, National High School Ethics Bowl
Parr Center for Ethics, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
I. THE BASICS: PROGRAM + SEASON OVERVIEW

Introduction and Organizational Structure

The National High School Ethics Bowl (NHSEB) is dedicated to hosting, nurturing, and promoting high school ethics bowls across the United States. NHSEB’s day-to-day operations are overseen by its Director and advised by an Executive Committee. As needed, topic-specific advisory committees and work groups may be formed by the Director. When the NHSEB Director, Executive Committee (or just “NHSEB”) contact is referenced below, please email ethicsbowl@unc.edu.

The NHSEB program, based at the University of North Carolina’s Parr Center for Ethics, hosts and organizes the National High School Ethics Bowl competition (“Nationals”) each April. Invitations to the Nationals are extended to teams based on their performance at regional qualifying ethics bowl competitions (“regionals”), in accordance with the procedures outlined in this document.

A Brief History of the NHSEB

The NHSEB was founded in 2012 as the product of a partnership between the Squire Family Foundation and UNC’s Parr Center for Ethics, with generous support from GlaxoSmithKline.

In its inaugural year, it served around 1,000 students from 89 schools in 11 states. 12 regional competitions sent their victors to the inaugural national competition, held on the UNC-CH campus in 2013. This initial event was modeled on the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl (IEB), and we are indebted to their sponsor, the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, and to the IEB’s creator, Robert Ladenson, for their example, inspiration, and assistance.

The NHSEB’s aims and ideals at the time of its founding were essentially three-fold: (1) to take seriously the contribution that teenagers make as members of their communities, (2) to cultivate skills and virtues central to democratic citizenship, and (3) to prepare students to navigate challenging moral issues in a thoughtful and open-minded way. All of these goals remain our lodestar, and inform our mission statement today.

Since 2013, the NHSEB has grown at a steady clip with the support of the UNC Philosophy Department and other partners and sponsors. As of 2019, the NHSEB serves thousands of students from over 500 teams, which represent 327 schools, nationally. Our headquarters at the Parr Center oversees 36 regionals in 28 states today, and directly administers the largest of those, the North Carolina High School Ethics Bowl.
Mission Statement

The National High School Ethics Bowl is a program that promotes respectful, supportive, and in-depth discussion of ethics among high school students nationwide. By engaging high school students in intensive ethical inquiry, the NHSEB fosters constructive dialogue and furthers the next generation's ability to make sound ethical decisions. Our collaborative model rewards students for the depth of their thought, their ability to think carefully and analytically about complex issues, and the respect they show to the diverse perspectives of their peers. As a result, it enables students to practice and build the virtues central to democratic citizenship, thus preparing them to navigate challenging moral issues in a rigorous, systematic, and open-minded way.

2019-2020 at a Glance

This year’s season will begin on September 11, 2019, with the online release of the 2019-2020 rules, resources, and the case set for regional qualifying competitions, as well as registration and information forms for schools and regional competitions, respectively. Regionals may occur any time between September and February 4, 2019. After the end of the regionals season, the Parr Center will organize and administer (with the help of volunteer regionals organizers) virtual playoffs for small regionals, in order to set the (24-team) competition roster for Nationals. A new case set for Nationals will be released in late February, after the last playoff has concluded. To culminate the season, the 2019-2020 National High School Ethics Bowl will take place April 17-19, 2020 on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
II. THE NHSEB FORMAT

Individual Match Format

Ethics bowl matches feature two teams meeting face-to-face to discuss and evaluate case studies which feature tricky moral questions or dilemmas. These cases typically come from one of the NHSEB’s annually released Case Sets—one for Regionals, one for Nationals. Each match will also have three judges and one moderator, and spectators are encouraged to attend as well.

While each team participating in a match may be composed of up to seven members, only up to five members may be seated at the table before the match opens. Substitutions may not occur during a match. Throughout the match, judges will evaluate each team based on their performance. A moderator will be in charge of the room during matches. They keep time and move the match through its various components (see below) while ensuring that all participants and spectators comply with the rules. For more on the respective roles of judges and moderators, see Section IV below.

Each match will begin with a coin toss. The team that wins the coin toss may elect to present first (designated as Team A) or to have the other team present first (in this situation, the winner of the coin toss is then designated as Team B).

To open the first half of the match, copies of the first case and question will be distributed to the judges and teams. The moderator will then read the case number, title, and a question for competition. Neither judges nor the teams will know in advance which case will be presented or which question will be asked. We’ll refer to this as the Moderator’s Period. The first half will then proceed as follows:

1. **Presentation Period**: After the case and question are introduced, Team A will have up to two minutes to confer, after which any member(s) of Team A may speak for up to six minutes in response to the moderator’s question, based on the team’s research and critical analysis. Team A must address the moderator’s question during the time allotted.

2. **Commentary Period**: Next, Team B will have up to one minute to confer, after which Team B may speak for up to three minutes to comment on Team A’s presentation.

3. **Response Period**: Team A will then have up to one minute to confer, followed by three minutes to respond to Team B’s commentary.

4. **Judges’ Period**: The judges will then begin their ten minute question and answer session with Team A. Before asking questions, the judges may confer briefly. Each judge should have time for at least one question, and may ask more questions if time permits.

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1 At the Nationals, teams will be provided with an extra minute, for a total of six minutes, during the Presentation period. Regional Competitions may use their discretion to keep the Presentation Period at five (as in past years) or to use six minutes.
Teams are allowed to briefly confer (20 to 30 seconds) before answering a judge's question. More than one team member may respond to a given judge's question. Judges then evaluate the Presentation, Response, and Responses to Judges' Questions by Team A and the Commentary by Team B, and assess the teams based on the judging guidelines found in Section IV below.

Upon the conclusion of each half of the match, judges will score each team as follows:

- **Team's Presentation on the Moderator's Question (up to 15 points):** In evaluating a team’s answer to the moderator’s question, the judges will give the team a score of 1-5 on each of these three evaluation criteria:
  - Did the presentation clearly and systematically address the case question asked?
  - Did the presentation identify and thoroughly discuss the central moral dimensions of the case raised by the question asked?
  - Did the presentation indicate both awareness and thoughtful consideration of different viewpoints, including those that would loom large in the reasoning of individuals who disagree?

- **Opposing Team’s Commentary (up to 10 points)**

- **Presenting Teams’ Response to the Opposing Team’s Commentary (up to 10 points)**

- **Presenting Team’s Responses to Judges’ Questions (up to 20 points)**

- **Each team’s display of Respectful Dialogue throughout the match (up to 5 points)**

The judges should not discuss their scoring decisions with each other; each judge is to rely on their own private judgment. For more information on the guidelines and rules for judges, see Section IV below.

After the judges have made their scoring decisions, the moderator will read the second case number, title, and question to the same two teams, beginning the second half of the match. The second half will proceed as above, with Team B presenting, Team A offering commentary, Team B responding, and then Team B participating in the judges’ question and answer session.

Thus, in each match, each team will have the opportunity to present one case and to respond to the other team’s presentation of another case, for a total of 60 points possible from each of the three judges.

As each match concludes, moderators will help validate scores with the judges and tabulate, based on the scores, which team receives each judge's vote. The winner of the match will be the team with the highest number of votes (out of three totals). For example:

- **Judge 1:** Team A 48, Team B 43 (1 vote for Team A)
- **Judge 2:** Team A 45, Team B 44 (1 vote for Team A)
- **Judge 3:** Team A 39, Team B 49 (1 vote for Team B)
Here, Team A is the winner of the match with two judges' votes despite the fact that Team B had a higher overall point total.

If a judge scores both teams equally (a tie), both teams are awarded \( \frac{1}{2} \) of that judge's vote. A match can end in a tie—if all three judges score the match a tie, or one judge votes for Team A, one for Team B, and one scores a tie. Point differential is not a factor in determining the winner of an individual match although it is a criterion that is used as a tiebreaker when ranking teams at the end of the seeding rounds (see Section III).

At the end of the match, the moderator will ask all the judges to individually announce their vote. Next, the moderator will name the winning team (or announce a tie) and the number of judges' votes for that team. Moderators will then pass score sheets to a room staffer who will return all materials to NHSEB HQ for compilation with scores from other matches.

Match Timing Overview\(^2\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>TIME ALLOWANCE</th>
<th>TOTAL TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderator's Period</td>
<td>can vary (~5 minutes)</td>
<td>~5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Period</td>
<td>2 minutes to confer</td>
<td>7 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 minutes to present</td>
<td>13 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary Period</td>
<td>1 minute to confer</td>
<td>14 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 minutes to comment</td>
<td>17 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Period</td>
<td>1 minute to confer</td>
<td>18 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 minutes to respond</td>
<td>21 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges' Period</td>
<td>10 minutes for Q+A</td>
<td>~31 minutes total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) This chart represents the timing for each half of a typical match. After Team A proceeds through the first half as the presenting team with Team B commenting, the process will repeat with Team B making a presentation, Team A commenting, and so on.
Match Rules

At the start of each match, scratch paper will be provided for team members to make notes during the match, but outside notes and materials are prohibited. All materials will be collected at the end of each match by the moderator or room staffer.

The moderator will keep official time of each period of the match. The moderator is allowed to use their own device to keep accurate time. Teams may use their own timers with the following restrictions and conditions: (a) the timer cannot be any device that stores data or connects to the internet, and (b) a team may not time the portions of the match when the other team speaks or confers. The moderator can allow a team to finish a sentence/thought once time has expired.

All teams will get two standardized time notifications from the moderator during their Presentation Period: one when three minutes remain and one when one minute remains. During the Commentary Period and Response Period, the moderator will give notifications when one minute remains. Prior to the match starting, moderators will consult with teams if they prefer auditory (verbal, knocks, etc.) or physical (e.g., a hand gesture, visual representation, etc.) reminders. When judges ask questions, the moderator will notify the panel when there are two minutes remaining.

The moderator controls the room during matches and should address any unacceptable behavior including, but not limited to:

- Coaches, parents, or audience members communicating—verbally or non-verbally, or demonstrably reacting to team members during a match.
- Judges showing hostility or asking inappropriate questions to team members. Inappropriate questions include, but are not limited to, any that highlight a participant's race, religion, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, appearance, etc. Judges should direct their constructive questions to teams based on the discussion, not to individuals.
- Anyone in the room who intentionally makes distracting noises while one of the teams, judges, or moderator has the floor.
- Foul, insulting, or excessively graphic language or confrontational behavior by anyone in the room.

Please note, the moderator can only control the noise within the match room. If there are outside distractions, such as construction or students talking, it is up to the moderator, not coach or parent, to decide if the match should be paused.

Teams must answer the moderator’s case question during the Presentation period. Teams are judged and scored on how well its members clearly and systematically address the question asked.

Teams will not be penalized or rewarded by the judges depending on whether one person speaks or everyone contributes. We have let the judges know that they should neither penalize nor reward a team for using either approach: both are welcome.
When one team confers or speaks, the other team and audience members must remain silent although writing and passing notes is permitted. (For example, when Team A is given the case and question, they are allowed to confer for two minutes and then present for six minutes. During those eight minutes, Team B is permitted to write notes, but must remain silent.)

Cases and Questions

Unless otherwise specified by a regional organizer, competing teams should use the NHSEB Regional or National case set and the included study questions to practice for the competition. The included study questions do not necessarily include the questions moderators will ask teams during the competition. Study questions are designed to help teams prepare, and to think more deeply about the issues at hand.

III. THE 2019-2020 SEASON IN DETAIL

Regional Qualifying Ethics Bowls: September 2019-February 2020

Teams typically begin their season by competing in a regional qualifying ethics bowl. Regional ethics bowl competitions will be held between September 11, 2019 and February 4, 2020.

In order to be recognized by the NHSEB, each regional should complete an information form either before that regional competition takes place or by November 1, 2019, whichever falls earlier on the calendar. Information on the completed form will be used to categorize each competition as “large” or “small” depending on the number of reported, registered, and participating schools (not teams). In the event that a regional competition does not complete the form by November 1, the NHSEB Executive Committee will exercise its own discretion to determine the regional size.

A regional competition will be recognized as either:

A. A large regional which will be categorized after November 1, 2019 or after the regional competition takes place, whichever is first. Large regionals are those bowls with the highest number of competing schools in the total field of regional competitions. The winning school of a large regional will automatically advance to the Nationals.

B. A small regional, which will be categorized after November 1, 2019 or after the regional competition takes place; whichever is first. Small regionals are those bowls with the least number of competing schools in the total field of regional competitions. The winning school of a small regional will compete in a virtual playoff against the winner of another small regional. This playoff will consist of a single match between the two teams, and the winner of this match will advance to the Nationals. Small regionals will be matched according to time.
zone region and/or on a rolling basis (e.g. if two small regionals take place on the same weekend) between February 4 and 22, 2020. The Parr Center for Ethics will coordinate the pairing of small regionals and organization of the virtual bowl playoffs in cooperation with regional organizers. For more information about the virtual playoffs see below.

The NHSEB will use a general formula to decide the field of large and small regional bowls. For 2020 Nationals, if 24 schools will field the competition (x), and the number of regionals competing in the season is (y), then:

**Large Regional Bowl** = largest 2x-y bowls

**Small Regional Bowl** = smallest 2(y-x) bowls, which will compete in y-x virtual playoffs to determine which school will compete at the National Bowl

In the event that some, but not all, of the bowls with a given number of schools competing can be defined as large regionals according to this formula, the NHSEB Executive Committee will use its discretion to determine which of those regionals will count as large, and which will count as small.

For example, if the total regional field for 2019-2020 is 33 regionals, then 15 regionals will be categorized as large and 18 regionals will be categorized as small. The small regional bowls (18) will be matched according to time zone and/or on a rolling basis, creating nine virtual playoffs. The winners of those playoffs will advance to the Nationals.

If a winning school cannot attend the Nationals, the NHSEB Executive Committee will allow the regional or virtual playoff runner-up to participate. **A qualifying school that cannot attend the Nationals should notify the NHSEB as soon as possible after winning their qualifying regional bowl, so that the runner-up has sufficient time to prepare to attend in their place.**

The NHSEB places no maximum limit on the number of schools or teams in any regional competition: however, regional organizers are allowed to cap the number of participating teams per school to enable a fair competition. Team composition is allowed to change from the regional competition to the Nationals; the high school is being represented, not an individual team. Multiple teams from one high school that competed in a qualifying regional competition can combine to form one team with up to seven members for the Nationals. If a school has multiple teams, all members must have competed in the same regional competition in order to create a single team for the Nationals.

If members of a winning team cannot compete at the Nationals, the result of which the team has fewer than three members and the high school has no additional teams, the coach/advisor should contact the NHSEB to request permission to add new members to the team.

A school may only participate in one qualifying regional bowl during an academic year. Schools are required to participate in the regional competition closest to their geographical area. Schools can ask the NHSEB Executive Committee for permission to participate in a different regional competition in lieu of their most local bowl. In order to be recognized as a participating school in a regional bowl, a team must comply with all provisions of Section IV.
Regional competitions are encouraged to conform to the NHSEB *Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines*. Experimentation with the NHSEB format, however, is welcomed with approval by the NHSEB Executive Committee. Regional organizers should notify the NHSEB about any modifications before their competition and report the effects of these changes after the competition. Successful changes may ultimately be adopted by the NHSEB. Lastly, regional organizers must inform the winning team about any changes compared to the NHSEB standard in order to minimize any (dis)advantage at the Nationals.

Matches in regional competitions must be judged by three neutral judges (not parents, coaches, or teachers from participating schools). See Section IV below for more on the judge role.

At the Nationals, the Presentation Period has expanded to six minutes in order to provide teams with more time due to the quality of preparation acknowledged from judges at previous Nationals. Regional organizers are not required to adopt the extra minute at their competition; they may continue to keep the Presentation Period at five minutes. Please communicate to teams about any similarities or differences in competition match format in comparison to the Nationals to minimize any confusion.

A winning regional school must have a school administrator (e.g. principal, dean, head of school) complete the Authorized Team Registration form and all participants (students, coaches/advisors and official chaperones) must complete Participant Disclosure and Release forms. These forms must be submitted to the Parr Center for Ethics no less than four weeks before the Nationals.

In order to be recognized as a participating school, a school must pay a registration fee of $125 to NHSEB at least four weeks before the regional competition. The preferred method is through the online registration located at *[go.unc.edu/nhsebregistration]*. If schools cannot pay online using a credit card, they may remit a check to the Parr Center for Ethics at the following address:

Parr Center for Ethics, c/o Alex Richardson  
240 East Cameron Avenue (CB #3125)  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

In the event of economic hardship, a school should consult the NHSEB for financial aid opportunities. Regional organizers may (but are not required to) charge additional registration fees for schools/teams in order to cover regional bowl expenses.

When a school pays its registration fee to the NHSEB, this does not automatically register the school to compete in a regional bowl. The coach/advisor of a team(s) must contact the regional organizer to participate in that bowl. Information on how to contact your regional organizer is located at [nhseb.unc.edu/regionals](http://nhseb.unc.edu/regionals).

Upon completion of a regional competition, the regional organizer should complete a post-qualifying information report provided by the NHSEB.
The NHSEB Director and Executive Committee reserve the right to make exceptions to these rules in the interests of fairness and consistency or when in the best interest of the NHSEB participants and the overall event.

Virtual Playoffs: February 2020

The winning schools of small regional competitions will compete in a virtual playoff to qualify for the Nationals. This playoff will consist of a single match between two winning teams from small regional bowls using Google Hangouts or a similar platform approved by the NHSEB. Small regional playoffs will be matched according to time zone region and/or on a rolling basis (e.g. if two small regionals take place on the same weekend) between February 4 and February 22, 2020. The playoff time and date will be mutually decided by the matched teams.

The NHSEB will provide a brief guide about using Google Hangouts and how to accept a video call, and more information is available here. In order to participate in the playoff, teams will need a Google account, as well as a computer with a web camera.

The virtual playoff will follow the NHSEB Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines. The Parr Center for Ethics, in collaboration with volunteer playoff organizers, will select the two cases from the NHSEB regional case set, create moderator questions, and select three judges and a moderator. Each team only needs a single computer with a web camera. Using external speakers or a microphone is not required, but these are helpful tools. Coaches will provide their students with blank paper, pens, and the complete case set for regional competitions. Before the virtual playoff begins, coaches and students will be asked to show their blank paper.

After Team A and Team B are determined for the match, the moderator will then announce the case number, title, and question. The moderator will also use Google Hangouts’ text chat feature to send this information to both teams. Once the teams confirm they have the accurate case and question, the moderator will begin the match. At any point during the match if there is a technological issue, the moderator may pause the time until the issue is resolved. Additionally, teams may use Google Hangouts’ text chat feature to communicate any issues that may occur to the moderator.

While one team is conferring, both teams should mute their microphones in order to eliminate any background noise. Please note that even though their microphone is muted, the other team should not verbally communicate.

The winner of the virtual bowl playoff will advance to Nationals.

The National Competition: April 17-19, 2020 @ UNC-Chapel Hill

The cases used at the Nationals will be released to the participating teams in late February, after all virtual playoffs have concluded. The Nationals will take place April 17-19, 2020. The competition will begin on the evening of April 17, 2019 with a Welcome Reception, followed on Saturday, April 18
with a Plenary Session required for all participating teams (students and coaches). The Nationals field will feature 24 teams from across the country.

At the Nationals, teams will be provided with an extra minute, for a total of six minutes, during the Presentation Period. Regional Competitions may use their discretion to keep the Presentation Period at five (as in previous years) or to use six minutes.

Each team will participate in four seeding matches, with teams assigned to matches by random draw. At the end of the fourth round, teams will be ranked by the number of wins (0-4). When two or more teams have the same number of wins, the following tiebreakers will be exercised, in this order:

1. **Lowest number of losses** (so a team that has 2 wins, 1 tie, and 1 loss will rank higher than a team with 2 wins and 2 losses)
2. **Highest number of judge votes** (over the course of four rounds, a team has the opportunity to win the votes of 12 judges. If two teams finish with 4 wins, but one team has 11 judge votes and the other has 10, the team with 11 votes is ranked higher)
3. **Greatest point differential** over all four matches (If two teams have 3 wins and 1 loss and 9 judge votes, and Team A has a total point differential of +30 [winning two matches by 12, winning one match by 10, and losing one match by 4] while Team B has a point differential of +28 [winning one match by 11, winning two matches by 9, and losing one match by 1], Team A will be ranked higher in the standings).
4. **Highest point total** over all four matches.
5. **A coin toss**.

The top eight teams after the four seeding matches will advance to the quarterfinals. The eight quarterfinal teams will be announced after lunch on Sunday, April 19, 2020.

The rules and procedures for the quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals will be identical to the other rounds. The winning teams from each of these rounds will advance (with tiebreakers as determined above). The winning team of the finals match will be named the National High School Ethics Bowl Champion. In the event of a tie of judges' votes during the finals, the two top-ranked teams will be named co-champions. If more clarification is needed on tiebreakers during the semifinals, quarterfinals, or finals, please contact the NHSEB Director.

After the finals, the finalists and semifinalists will be presented with trophies and the winner of the *Robert Ladenson Spirit of the Ethics Bowl Award* will be announced. This award will go to the team which best embodies the spirit and ideals of the ethics bowl, as voted on by all teams. The criteria include:

- Respect, civility and courtesy for others, both during the rounds and informal discussion;
- Thoughtfulness, in terms of expressing their positions and commenting on other teams' presentations;
- Sportsmanship, in terms of valuing collaboration above competition.
All participating teams will be recognized for their achievement.

**IV. OFFICIAL RULES + PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES**

Rules for Teams

Teams must meet the following criteria to qualify for and participate in the National High School Ethics Bowl, and to count as a qualifying team in their regional competition:

- **Students**: A team must be composed of at least three high school students. NHSEB teams will be capped at seven students (all of whom participated on a qualifying team at a regional bowl – see below), but keep in mind that only five students can be seated on a team in any one match.
  - A team must represent an accredited and certified school that offers classes for grades 9, 10, 11, and/or 12 in the United States and must have the official endorsement of the school administration to participate in NHSEB.
  - Students participating in a dual enrollment program qualify to join or create a high school ethics bowl team.
  - Homeschool exception: Regional organizers may, at their discretion, allow a team or teams of homeschool students to participate. Regional organizers should attempt to verify high school age and encourage homeschool students to form a team from multiple families. Participants may not be otherwise enrolled in another accredited high school.

- **Coaches**: All teams must have a coach or advisor vetted and approved by school administration. *If a team does not have an adult coach or advisor approved by the school’s administration, the team cannot compete at the Regional or National bowl.*
  - Homeschool exception: the coach or advisor of a homeschool team will be vetted and approved by the NHSEB Executive Committee.

The student composition of the team is allowed to change from the regional bowl to the Nationals.

- The high school is represented at the Nationals, not individual teams.
- If a school enters multiple teams into a regional competition, those teams can combine to form a new team for the Nationals with up to seven members. All members from both teams need to be registered and must have competed in the same regional competition in order to create one team for the Nationals.
• A team may substitute members from round to round if a team has more than five registered members; substitution cannot occur not during a match.

• If members of a winning team cannot compete at the Nationals, the result of which the team has fewer than three members and the high school has no additional teams, the coach/advisor should contact the NHSEB Executive Committee to request permission to add members to the team.

All members of the team must be enrolled at the participating high school during the semesters that both the regional competition and Nationals take place. No graduates may participate.

Teams must pay the NHSEB registration fee prior to competing at their regional competition.

Team members (students, coaches, and official chaperones) are expected to follow all federal, state, and local laws while traveling to/from and attending either their regional competition or the Nationals. Illegal activity and/or disruptive behavior (including, but not limited to, intoxication, violence, verbal abuse, or harassment) may result in the removal of the participant(s) and disqualification of the team.

Guidelines for Teams

High school ethics bowl is not speech + debate, and this is an important distinction. In ethics bowl, teams are not required to pick opposing sides, nor is the goal to “win” the argument by knocking down the other team or its position. Ethics bowl is, at heart, a collaborative discussion during which the first team presents its analysis of a question about the ethical dilemma at the core of the case being discussed, offering support for its position but also considering the merits of other positions.

The central goal in NHSEB competition is to demonstrate breadth and depth of thinking about difficult and important ethical situations. In fact, teams are rewarded for the degree to which they eschew adversarial positioning and instead adopt a more collegial, collaborative stance.

• In other words, teams are strongly encouraged to think of themselves as being on the same side rather than as opponents. That is, both teams are working together trying to solve a difficult problem—while impressing the judges with thoughtful, considered analysis and support. Listening to the other team with an aim to affirm, gently correct, supplement, or build on their argument is a prudent approach and one that expresses the ideals of the NHSEB.

• Because an ethics bowl encourages collaboration, team members are encouraged to remain seated rather than standing during a match.

Teams are not penalized or rewarded depending on whether one person speaks or everyone contributes. We understand that each team has its own process:
• Some divide up the cases so that individuals are responsible for a certain number of cases; as a result, one person would present. Other teams ask that each member of the team become responsible for a different aspect of all the cases; as a result, all team members would speak.

• Either of these strategies or variations is feasible and scoring is neutral on this issue.

• At the Nationals, judges know that they should neither penalize nor reward a team for using either approach: both are welcome.

Successful analyses will include a clear and detailed understanding of the facts of a case. Since cases are often highly complex, researching the topic or incident involved may be helpful. As such, there are no limits on the amount of prior research a team can do to prepare. Although teams may use outside research to prepare for a match, they should not assume that merely presenting factual information will impress the judges. Teams need to propose valid, sound, persuasive arguments that are buttressed by fact to score well. If a team introduces a specific fact not contained in the case, the team should cite the source (e.g. “according to a 2019 article in The Atlantic…”).

When researching cases, teams should think of this as an opportunity to gather and assess arguments supporting a wide range of points of view rather than to seek only those sources that support opinions the team already holds. As team members analyze the range of arguments, they should strive to understand the perspectives of those who have different beliefs and concerns than the ones with which they are familiar. Some key questions to ask might be: What motivates people to have certain beliefs? What are their values? A team should also ask themselves: “Why is this case difficult or complex?” If it doesn’t seem to be difficult, it is a good sign a team is not probing deeply enough. The cases are designed to challenge world views. Asking questions like these will help a team solidify its own position.

During the Presentation Period, a team should make sure it briefly introduces the case and identifies the central moral question. A team must clearly and systematically address the case question asked by the moderator. After presenting a position, a team should explain how others might have different points of view. Empathize with these other positions even if your team disagrees.

**During the Commentary Period, a team’s role is to help the other team perfect its presentation, not to present its own position on the case.** When team members comment, they should think of themselves as thoughtful, critical listeners. Their goal is to point out the flaws in the presentation, to comment on its strengths, note what has been omitted or needs further development. All of these contributions are in the interest of strengthening the analysis of the case.

Although teams are allowed to and should pose questions during Commentary, the first team is under no obligation to answer any or all questions raised by the second team (or vice versa). The presenting team, however, should be able to answer the most crucial or morally pressing question or two (in the event that there are more).

• Teams are expected to ask insightful questions that target the primary position, key implications, or unaddressed central issues.
• When scoring Commentary, judges will consider the questions raised by the opposing team and whether the questions addressed truly substantive issues—both in relation to the presentation and the moderator’s case question.
• A “question shower” or “rapid-fire questioning,” during which a team asks many questions in an attempt to overwhelm or dominate the other team, is inconsistent with the aims of the NHSEB, and will not merit a high score.

On occasion, team members may discover that they want to modify or perhaps change an aspect of their initial position as a result of the second team’s commentary. Some judges may think this indicates that the team did not fully think through its initial position. However, because the ethics bowl is about ethical inquiry, and because these are high school students, and 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 is not necessarily negative.

Judging the quality of a team’s analysis can often be subjective and difficult. It is easy for teams to fault or blame judges if they lose a match. To fully understand how each judge will reach their decisions, please read the guidelines for judges below. Judges come from diverse backgrounds: some are philosophers or professional ethicists; others come from a range of professional fields such as business, education, medicine, or journalism; and some are fans of ethics bowls. Part of the task of a successful team is to communicate reasoning effectively to judges who have different viewpoints and life experiences.

Because of judges’ diverse backgrounds, it is not essential for teams to reference specific ethicists or ethical theories: doing so is not a requirement of a good answer, nor is it indicative of a poor answer. The argument matters; it is not necessary to name the philosopher associated with the argument. Keep in mind that a team is speaking to a broad audience: many judges have no formal background in philosophy or ethics, and may not understand your reference to “Kantianism.” A good strategy is to explain ethical reasoning in terms everyone can understand.

If a team member does refer to, say, “deontology” for example, make sure the reference is accurate. A judge may question a team about that specific theory during the judges’ question & answer portion of the match.

In short, just remember that philosophical name-dropping is not a substitute for presenting a sound argument.

Rules for Judges

All matches at the Nationals or a regional competition should be judged by a panel of three neutral judges. That is, a judge should not be a coach or parent of a child on any participating team; teachers should not judge their own students; judges should not have other obvious conflicts of interest. If a regional organizer is unsure if a judge is neutral, contact the NHSEB before assigning the judge in question.
Judges should not interrupt teams during their presentation, commentary, or response periods by asking questions, offering prompts, or gesturing. Judges should maintain a judicial and unbiased tone towards all teams. Socializing with teams and/or their coaches before or after a match is discouraged (e.g. greeting teams or coaches you may know). This behavior can appear to confer an unfair advantage to one team over another. Please wait until the competition has completely ended to approach teams or coaches to avoid the appearance of unfair judging.

Judges should direct their questions to a team as a whole and not an individual or a subset of the team. It would be particularly inappropriate to ask a question of student(s) based on an immutable characteristic, such as race, religion, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, appearance, etc. (e.g., addressing a question about immigration to a student who speaks with an accent).

Judges should score based solely upon content, not on whether one person, a few, or all team members speak:

- Each team decides for itself how to divide up speaking time during all portions of the match. Some teams choose to have an individual “own” a certain case. Other teams prefer to have each person on the team speak for a portion of the match.
- Teams should be neither rewarded nor penalized for taking either approach. Teams have been advised to explain who will speak at the beginning their Presentation so that everyone has an idea of how the presentation will be structured.

Judges should not discuss their scoring decisions with each other; each judge is to rely on their own private judgment.

It is counterproductive when judges talk to teams about their scoring (particularly other judges’ scoring). Teams will receive score sheets with comments after the event is over. Please refrain from explaining scores, giving overt criticism to a team during or after a match, or expressing disagreement with a fellow judge’s scoring. Teams need to focus on their next match, not a comment that a judge made at the end of the previous match.

The moderator “runs the room.” Moderators will direct the match by indicating whose turn it is to speak and how much time remains. At the end of the match, the moderator will collect the judges’ score sheets, help assist with calculations if needed, and ask individual judges to announce their team vote. In the unlikely event that something out of the ordinary occurs or the match is disrupted, the moderator will direct participants on next steps.

Guidelines for Judges

A judge’s role in ethics bowl is to gauge a team’s breadth and depth of thought as applied to a specific case. These guidelines will help to explain how to evaluate a team’s performance in combination with the score sheet and scoring criteria:
• Teams have received the cases several weeks, if not months, in advance. They have prepared by meeting to discuss the ethical components of the cases and to formulate their analyses. During ethics bowl, the teams know that the cases they will discuss come from this set, but they do not know which case will be used in any given round, nor do they know the question asked (until announced by the moderator).

• A good answer indicates both breadth and depth of thought. A prepared team recognizes that there are multiple viewpoints or possible “answers,” discusses them, and then explicates its own position about the case. The presentation should clearly and systematically address the moderator’s case question.

• The second team then has time to comment on the first team’s presentation. This commentary should be focused on the team’s primary 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 will have the opportunity to present a case during the other half of the match.

During the Commentary Period, the first team is under no obligation to answer any or all questions raised by the second team (or vice versa). The presenting team, however, should be able to answer the most crucial or morally pressing question or two (in the event that there are more than two questions).

• Teams are expected to ask insightful questions that target the primary position, key implications, or unaddressed central issues.

• When scoring the Commentary period, judges will consider the questions raised by the opposing team and whether the questions addressed truly substantive issues—both in relation to the presentation and the moderator’s question.

• A “question shower” or “rapid-fire questioning,” during which a team asks many questions in an attempt to overwhelm or dominate the other team, is inconsistent with the aims of the NHSEB, and will not merit a high score.

During the Presentation, Commentary and Response periods, judges do not ask questions or comment. 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 the team an 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. When asking your question(s), please be mindful of the time that remains for other judges to ask their questions as well as for the team to respond.

• 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. This includes addressing and evaluating opposing or different viewpoints. 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, team members may discover that they want to modify or perhaps change an aspect of their initial “position” as a result of the second team’s commentary. Some judges may think this indicates that the team did not fully think through its initial position. However, because the ethics bowl is about ethical inquiry, and because these are high school students, and 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 is not necessarily 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 should be judged on its individual merits.

Finally, at the bottom of the score sheet, a team can receive up to 5 points for engaging in productive and respectful dialogue as opposed to combative debate. This is to underscore the importance of civil and respectful dialogue—values of central importance to the NHSEB program. 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. Ethics bowl 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, or are unduly adversarial.

**Procedures for Moderators**

All moderators will use the NHSEB Moderator Script to guide matches. The moderator script is reproduced in this document’s Appendix below, and is also available for download at [nhseb.unc.edu/rules-documents](http://nhseb.unc.edu/rules-documents). It is strongly recommended that moderators adhere to the script and not improvise.

The moderator’s timekeeping efforts help the event unfold in a timely manner and ensure that all teams have equal opportunities to express their arguments.

All teams will get two standardized time notifications from the moderator during their Presentations: one when three minutes remain and one when one minute remains. During the Commentary and Response periods, the moderator will give notifications with one minute remaining. Prior to the match starting, moderators will consult with teams if they prefer auditory (verbal, knocks, etc.) or physical (a hand gesture, visual representation, etc.) reminders. During the judges’ questions portion of the match, the moderator will notify the panel when two minutes remain.

No more than five students can be seated on a team. Teams cannot substitute members, review notes or confer with their coach once a match begins. Moderators will provide scratch paper and pens supplied by the event organizer.
The moderator will announce the beginning of the match once everyone is settled by welcoming teams, coaches and judges, and introducing themselves. Next, judges and the teams will be invited to introduce themselves. Matches will then follow the format above. In brief:

1. Each match will begin with a coin toss, either with a physical coin or the use of a coin flip application by the moderator. The team that wins the coin toss may elect to present first (designating them as Team A) or to have the other team present first (in which case the team winning the toss is designated as Team B).

2. In the first half of the match, copies of the first case and question will be distributed to the judges first and then the participants, Team A and Team B. Neither the judges nor team members will know which case will be presented or what question will be asked. The moderator will distribute copies of the cases and question face down so that no one seems the case before the moderator reads the case question.

3. The moderator will announce the case by its title and read the question. The moderator should only read the case title and the question; not the entire case, if listed.

4. Team A has 2 minutes to confer. Either team may take notes, but Team B must remain silent.

5. Team A has up to 6 minutes to make its presentation. Any member(s) of the team may speak.

6. Team B has 1 minute to confer (Team A is silent)

7. Team B has up to 3 minutes to comment on the presentation. Any member(s) may comment.

8. Team A has 1 minute to confer (Team B is silent)

9. Team A has 3 minutes to respond to Team B. Any member(s) may respond.

10. Judges have 30 seconds to confer, if they would like, and then ask questions of Team A. The question and answer period will last for up to 10 minutes. Judges’ questions should be brief, clear, and devoid of personal commentary.

11. Judges score Team A’s presentation and response, and Team B’s commentary.

12. In the second half of the match, steps 2-11 are repeated with a new case and question, and with the teams reversing positions (i.e., Team A becomes Team B).

13. At the end of the match, the moderator will ask the judges to announce their team votes. After all the judges state their votes, the moderator will name the winning team (or announce a tie) and the number of judges’ votes for that team. Moderators will then pass score sheets to a room staffer who will return all materials back to the competition headquarters for compilation with scores from other matches.