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MAHARASHTRA NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, CHHTRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL LAWS (CICCL)

&

CENTRE FOR ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (CADR)

organizes

SENIOR ADVOCATE LATE SHRI P.M. SHAH

5th MNLUCS NATIONAL CLIENT COUNSELLING COMPETITION 2027

13th and 14th February, 2027

RULEBOOK

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RULEBOOK NATIONAL CLIENT COUNSELLING COMPETITION

1. Objective of the Competition

In a country like India, there has been a wide gap in the standards set by the stalwarts of legal practice and the actual ground practice. The competition, named after Senior Advocate Late Shri P.M. Shah, pays homage to one such pioneer by narrowing this gap, by providing a practical platform to develop essential lawyering skills that go beyond theoretical knowledge. It aims to train participants in effective client interaction by focusing on listening, understanding client concerns, identifying legal issues, and offering clear, ethical, and practical advice. By placing students in the role of practicing advocates, the competition seeks to bridge the gap between classroom learning and professional practice, preparing them for the responsibilities and challenges of the legal profession.

2. Definitions

2.1. "CADR." – Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution, MNLU-CS.

2.2. "CICCL." – Centre for International Corporate and Commercial Laws, MNLU-CS.

2.3. "Client." – An individual appointed by the organising committee for seeking/receiving the services of a counsel, in accordance with the office memo of the competition.

2.4. "Competition." – Refers to the 5th Edition of Senior Advocate Late Shri P.M. Shah National Client Counselling Competition, 2027.

2.5. "Country of Residence." - For the sake of this Competition, any and every client's country of residence shall be as mentioned in the office memo of or a particular round.

2.6. "Counsel." – Any qualified legal professional, responsible for providing legal advice to his clients, representing them in court proceedings and drafting documents for them to be used in those court proceedings.

2.7. "Equity Board." – Board constituted by the Organising Committee for resolving the disputes arising between the participants, or participants and organising committee, or participants and any student/faculty/staff of the University.

2.8. "Adjudicator." – An individual carrying experience in client-counselling and is an expert in the relevant field and includes a Practitioner in a Court of Law, an Associate, Partner or Senior Partner in a Law Firm.

2.9. "Office Memo." – The correspondence sheet comprising of the details of the client(s) and/or his problems, basis which he seeks to receive services of the counsel.

2.10. “Organising Committee.” – The organising and administrating body of the competition comprising of students of CADR and CICCL.
2.11. “Participant.” – Any individual who is eligible to participate in the Competition.
2.12. “Quarter-finals.” – Rounds subsequent to preliminary rounds, whereby top 8 teams from the preliminary round compete against each other and top 4 teams, in terms of aggregate scores, qualify for the semi-final rounds.
2.13. “Semi-finals.” – Rounds subsequent to quarter-finals, whereby 4 teams compete against each other and top 2 teams, in terms of aggregate scores, qualify for the final round.
2.14. “Student of law.” – Any student who is currently enrolled in the undergraduate five years (5 years) law programme, recognised by the Bar Council of India or three years (3 years) law programme, in any college/university/law school/department in India.
2.15. “Team.” – A group of eligible participants, comprising of not more than 2 individuals of the same college/university/law school/department.

3. Eligibility

Any student of law (defined under 2.14) can apply for the competition and is eligible for the competition.

4. Registration

4.1. Registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, although the number may increase subject to the discretion of the organising committee.
4.2. By registering for and/or entering this Competition, all participants agree to be bound by the rules contained herein. Not more than two teams from any particular institution of law shall be permitted to participate in the Competition. However, only one slot shall be allotted to each institution of law initially, and the second slot shall be allotted subject to the availability of slots after accommodating all the interested institutions of law.
4.3. The interested teams must register on or before 15th January, 2027 by filling the registration form given here.
4.4. The registration fee for the competition is INR 7,000 inclusive of accommodation and food. The details regarding the final registration will be shared in duly with the universities provisionally registered for the competition. The registration fees, once submitted, shall not be refunded under any circumstances.

4.6. Upon successful completion of registration, a Team Code shall be assigned to each team. The Team Code will be communicated to the registered team within 48 hours of registration.

5. Team Composition

One team shall comprise two participants only (Counsel 1 and Counsel 2). The team members shall be from a single institute and shall represent a single institute. Cross-institutional teams are not allowed.

6. Official Language

The official language of the Competition shall be English. All written and/or oral submissions made to and/or before the adjudicators shall be in English.

7. Rounds

7.1. The Competition shall consist of one preliminary round, following which eight teams out of the total participating teams shall qualify for the quarter-final rounds on the basis of their absolute score in the preliminary round.

7.2. Four teams with the highest absolute score shall qualify from the quarter-final rounds to the semi-final rounds.

7.3. Two teams with the highest absolute score shall qualify from the semi-final rounds to the final round.

7.4. Winner of the final round, decided based on the highest absolute score in the final round, shall be declared the Winner of the Competition.

[***Note:*** *During the Preliminary Rounds, scouting is strictly prohibited, and teams are not allowed to observe the sessions of other competitors. However, participants who have been eliminated may be permitted to observe the Semi-Final and Final rounds as audience members, subject to the discretion of the Organizing Committee and Court Room Managers.]*

8. Nature of the Rounds

8.1. The Rounds shall be conducted in physical mode in the campus of MNLU-CS.

8.2. The dates of the Rounds shall be on 13th and 14th February, 2027.

8.3. The competition simulates a law office consultation in which both the participants deal with a client. The team conducts an interview with a dummy client and the adjudicator evaluates the performance. The office memo shall be provided 24 hours prior to the competition and the client will be provided on the spot.

8.4. Each round shall be divided broadly into two segments, i.e., (a) client-consultation session and (b) post-consultation session.

8.4.1 In the client-consultation session, participants shall be expected to extract factual information from the client, briefly analyse the issue(s) at hand, and make recommendations to the client in order to resolve his or her problem.
8.4.2 In the post-consultation session, the participants shall be expected to legally analyse the interview and the various issues of the matter (or case) present and discuss a future course of action. They shall further be expected to discuss the recommendations made by them to the client and whether an alternative approach could be or has been adopted to attain a better outcome from the session. The panel of adjudicators may, during this period, question the participants on their presentation.
8.5. It is clarified here that the participants shall tender legal advice to their client(s) with reference to the laws of his country of residence as specified in the Office Memo.

9. Time Limits

The client-consultation session shall be of following lengths are:
Preliminary Rounds: 20 minutes
Quarter-Final Rounds: 25 minutes
Semi-Final Rounds: 30 minutes
Final Rounds: 40 minutes
The post-consultation session shall be of 5 minutes in Preliminary and Quater Final Rounds and 10 minutes in Semi-Final and Final Rounds, during which the students may either talk to each other loudly enough to be overheard by the adjudicators, or dictate a file memorandum on the interview, or both.

10. Use of External Equipments

Participants are expected not to bring any props or office furnishings of the kind for usage during the rounds. There shall be no marking done based on such extra offerings.
Provided that, this shall not be construed as a prohibition against bringing books or any other relevant materials into the room.

11. Competition Topics

The theme for all the rounds shall be based on any or the entire spectrum of laws including:

- IPR and AI Law
- White Collar Crimes

Along with other codified and un-codified laws relevant to the theme.

12. Process of Competition

12.1. For the purpose of the competition, all the teams shall be divided into 2 pools – Pool A, Pool B – by the Organising Committee.

*[**Note:** The number of pools are subject to the total number of teams participating in the Competition.]*

12.2. Each team in each Pool shall undergo one preliminary round.

12.3. Top 8 teams shall qualify for the quarter-final rounds, qualifying which 4 teams shall proceed for the semi-final rounds, qualifying which the 2 teams shall compete in the final round.

12.4. In the event of a tie in scores between two teams, the same shall be resolved on the basis of –

First, the aggregate points of the problem analysis, followed by the client's goals and expectations (in case the aggregate points in the problem analysis are the same), followed by obtaining information (in case the aggregate points in the client's goals and expectations are the same); and

Second, on the basis of a coin (unbiased) toss, if and only if the tie is not resolved by the above-mentioned method.

13. Adjudication of Rounds

The adjudicator's question-answer round with the counsellors will be of 5 minutes in the preliminary rounds, and quarter-finals and 10 minutes in the semi-finals and finals, in addition to the time slots already allocated. Each participant shall be marked out of a maximum of 100 marks by each adjudicator, and every participant shall be adjudicated for his/her performance(s) based on the following criteria: (Each criterion will be marked out of 10.)

1) Establishing an effective professional relationship
2) Obtaining information
3) Learning the client's goals, expectations and needs
4) Factual analysis of the client's problems
5) Legal analysis and giving advice
6) Developing reasoned courses of action
7) Assisting the client to make an informed choice
8) Effectively concluding the interview
9) Teamwork
10) Post interview reflection period

*[**Note:** Evaluation done by the adjudicators of each round shall be final and binding on all the teams.]*

14. Awards

The details of the awards and the certificates that will be provided to the winner and other merit holders have been provided in the competition brochure which has been provided to all the teams.

*[**Note:** All internship opportunities awarded to meritorious participants are strictly subject to the internal policies, eligibility criteria, and operational convenience of the respective providing law firms.]*

15. Code of Conduct for the Participants

15.1. The Organising Committee reserves the right to disqualify any team or participant for any kind of misconduct on the part of any team member(s) or coach during the Competition. In case of any doubt/dispute, the decision of the Organising Committee shall be final. Any violation of the code of conduct will invite instant disqualification.

15.2. Misconduct, whether behavioural or otherwise, is not allowed and if indulged into shall result in disqualification of the team. Misconduct shall include:

- Disclosure of identity to other participants or adjudicators during the competition. The participants should use the Team Codes provided.
- Any attempt by participants to obtain the client counselling topic before notification.
- Any attempt by participant(s) to speak about controversial matters such as religion, caste, race, gender, foul language, or anti-national rhetoric before or during the competition.
- Any discussion with client(s) before competition.
- Cheating or using unfair means.
- Intimidation in any form.
- Commission of any offense punishable in India by any law in force, within the premises of the University. It may further lead to prosecution of the alleged offender.

16. Dispute Resolution

All grievances/disputes shall be addressed to the Equity Board constituted for the Competition. The Board's decision in this regard shall be final.

17. Dress Code

All the participants must wear a formal dress (black pants and a white shirt) for the entire duration of the competition. Girls are allowed to wear white kurti/black salwar. Use of advocates' gowns, bands or robes is strictly prohibited.

18. Powers of the Organising Committee

18.1. The Organising Committee shall be the administrating and coordinating body for the competition.

18.2. The Organising Committee shall serve as the final arbiter of interpretation and implementation of the Rules set hereabove.

18.3. The Organising Committee reserves the right to add, modify, or repeal any rule in order to give effect to the purpose of the Competition.
18.4. The Organising Committee's decision shall be final in case of any dispute/doubt.
18.5. The Organising Committee reserves the right to disqualify any team or participant for any kind of misconduct on the part of any team member(s) or coach during the Competition
18.6. The Organising Committee may take such other measures as may be required for the purposes of giving effect to any oral provisions of these rules and for the fair conduct of the Competition.