

# THE OFFICIAL RULES OF 2025 ACA/PILIWA MOOT COURT COMPETITION

## Part 1

### *Preliminary Matters*

#### **1. Definitions.**

In these Rules, unless the context otherwise requires

‘ACA’ Advocates for Community Alternatives

‘Bailiff/Court Clerk’ is a person appointed by the Steering Committee to keep the time and assist the judges in managing the courtroom during an oral round of the Competition.

‘Competition’ means the ACA/ PILIWA Moot Court Competition.

‘Hypothetical Case’ means the official problem of the Competition as supplemented, modified, corrected, or clarified.

‘Judge’ means a qualified person appointed by the Steering Committee to grade a memorial or judge an oral round of the Competition.

‘Memorial’ means the written pleadings or submissions of a team registered to participate in the moot Competition and submitted pursuant to these Rules.

‘Oralist’ is a member of a team who argues in an oral round of the Competition.

‘PILIWA’ means The Public Interest Lawyering Initiative for West Africa (PILIWA)

‘Rules’ mean the official rules governing the conduct of the proceedings of the Competition.

‘Steering Committee’ means the Steering Committee of the Competition

‘Virtual Round’ means any competition round conducted through approved online platforms.

#### **2. General**

2.1 The official name of the competition is ACA/PILIWA Moot Court Competition

2.2 ACA/PILIWA Moot Court Competition is organized by the ACA, PILIWA, and hosted by the College of Law, Caleb University.

2.3 The Competition is governed by these Rules and any supplementary regulations issued by the Steering Committee.

2.4 The 1<sup>st</sup> PILIWA/ACA Moot Court Competition is scheduled to take place in a hybrid format. The virtual round, which is the first leg of the competition (preliminary round and quarter final rounds), will take place online via ZOOM. It is scheduled for 17-21 November 2025. The final round of the competition (semi-finals and final rounds) will take place in person at the College of Law, Caleb University, Magodo City Campus, Lagos State, from 27 to 28, 2025.

### **3. The Steering Committee**

- 3.1 A Steering Committee appointed by Executives of ACA/PILIWA is responsible for organizing the Competition and ensuring provisions of these rules are adhered to as far as interpretation or enforcement is concerned.
- 3.2 If the Steering Committee receives a complaint of violation of these Rules or a request for its interpretation, it will promptly consider it. The Steering Committee's determination or interpretation is final.
- 3.3 If circumstances require it, the Steering Committee may modify or suspend the operation of any of these Rules in the interest of the Competition. Any such modification or suspension shall promptly be communicated to the participants.
- 3.4 The Steering Committee takes charge of programmes outlined for the moot competition and other activities expected to take place during the Moot week.

### **4. Language**

- 4.1 The Moot Competition is held in the English Language.

## **Part 2**

### ***4.1 Eligibility and Registration***

- 4.2 Participation in the Moot is open to undergraduate law students (full-time or part-time) from accredited Faculties of Law in the South-west region of Nigeria.
- 4.3 Participants are required to argue a hypothetical case as if they were appearing before the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights.
- 4.4 Only 1 team per university shall participate in the Competition. A team consists of only 2 students and 1 Faculty representative (coach) from the same University.
- 4.5 Notwithstanding 4.4 above, teams may be accompanied by a 'student observer'. The observer is not an official team member and his/her participation is limited only to following the moot proceedings as a spectator.
- 4.6 As far as possible, team composition should reflect gender diversity and fair representation of gender in team selection.
- 4.7 Student participants are eligible to participate in the moot competition no more than once.
- 4.8 The following individuals are not eligible as team members
  - a. Postgraduate law students
  - b. Judicial officers
  - c. A qualified legal practitioner
  - d. An individual who has completed his course of study and is awaiting the conferral of a law degree
- 4.9 A participating university shall complete the prescribed registration forms not later than the Steering Committee's specified date.

- 4.10 Each team shall designate for the Steering Committee an Official Team Contact. Notice to the Team Contact constitutes notice to all team members.

## **5. Substitution of Team Members**

- 5.1 It is expected that the same two (2) students who registered for the Moot Competition must participate throughout the competition.
- 5.2 A participating university may, by a written request addressed to the Steering Committee, apply for the substitution of a team member. The request shall indicate the reason(s) for the substitution.
- 5.3 A team member duly registered to participate in the Competition may be substituted if the Steering Committee approves a request for such substitution.

## **6. Panel of Judges**

- 6.1 Judges appointed for the ACA/PILIWA Moot Competition are expected to be individuals who are well-versed experts in international law, human rights, and environmental law. They are expected to also be abreast of mooting procedures and rules.
- 6.2 There shall be a full bench of three judges for every court session in all the rounds of the competition. One of the judges shall sit as the presiding judge.
- 6.3 The president judge shall be responsible for keeping order in the courtroom and ensuring adherence to the competition rules.
- 6.4 Students are not eligible to act as judges.
- 6.5 Team advisors, coaches, faculty representatives, or other persons directly affiliated with a team shall not act as judges in a round in which their team participates.
- 6.6 Assessments of a team's performance are done holistically and not based on the underlying merits of the hypothetical case.
- 6.7 Judges should allow oralists to make out their cases within the stipulated timeframe and limit and keep narrative commentaries to the barest minimum.
- 6.8 The Bailiff will make available the scoring sheets. Judges are expected to be guided by the following:
- a. Application of law to facts – 20marks
  - b. Articulate analysis of the issues- 15 marks
  - c. Appreciation and use of international authorities- 20 marks
  - d. Response to questions -15 marks
  - e. Persuasiveness – 10marks
  - f. Time Management – 10marks
  - g. Courtroom Etiquette – 10marks
- 6.9 At the preliminary rounds, each oralist may be awarded a maximum score of 100 marks. A team's total score in each round shall be determined by calculating the average of the individual scores obtained by each oralist.

## **7. Clarification of Hypothetical Case**

- 7.1 Participants may submit via email: [piliwamoot@advocatesforalternatives.org](mailto:piliwamoot@advocatesforalternatives.org) written requests for clarification of points in the hypothetical case, which are manifestly unclear and which must be clarified for them to develop their pleadings.
- 7.2 Requests for clarification must be received by the Steering Committee not later than 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2025. Clarifications will be made available to all participants and uploaded on the website by 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2025.
- 7.3 It is expected that before memorial submission, each team confirms whether or not there has been any such clarification necessitating an updated hypothetical case.

## **Part Three**

## **8. Memorials**

- 8.1 Each participating team shall prepare memorials in support of the cases of the Applicant and Respondent.
- 8.2 The memorials should be submitted in electronic format (Microsoft Word and PDF) to [piliwamoot@advocatesforalternatives.org](mailto:piliwamoot@advocatesforalternatives.org) no later than 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2025. Failure to submit written memorials within the stipulated deadline will result in disqualification from the competition.
- 8.3 The memorials should be sent in a single email with the two different attachments titled “Applicant” and “Respondent.” The Team number must be used as the subject of the email.
- 8.4 A memorial shall consist of the following:
  - a. A cover page which should bear the Team Number
  - b. A table of contents
  - c. Index of authorities (including corresponding page numbers)
  - d. Identification of issues
  - e. Statement of Facts
  - f. The substantive arguments, including the conclusion and prayers for relief, must not exceed 4000 words. (Note that the table of contents, index of authorities and case title are not included in the word count).
- 7.5 A memorial must be typewritten, double-spaced, in 12 Times New Roman font, and have a one-inch margin on all sides. The text of footnotes and headings should be single-spaced. The font size of footnotes must be 10.
- 7.6 Quotations of sources outside of the memorial of forty words or more in any part of the memorial shall be block-quoted and must be single-spaced.
- 7.7 Be mindful of plagiarism and academic integrity; all submissions are subject to the rules of plagiarism detection. The originality of work is required of all teams. Violations may result in disqualification.
- 7.8 All academically approved citation formats are accepted; however, consistency is important.

7.9 Participants are advised to have extra copies of their memorials handy, as the Steering Committee will not provide computer or photocopying facilities to participants during the moot Competition.

## **9. Memorial Grading**

9.1 Independent experts will be consulted to mark and grade the memorials. The names of the Universities to which the memorials belong are not disclosed to the independent experts.

9.2 The scoring criteria for memorials shall be as follows:

- a. Knowledge of facts and law-20 marks
- b. Analysis of issues-40 marks
- c. Research and use of authorities- 20 marks
- d. Formal presentation (Grammar, style, and structure)-20 marks

8 The team with the best memorials is announced at the end of the Competition during the prize-giving ceremony.

## **9 Scouting, Verbal and Non-Verbal Communications during Competition**

9.1 Except with the authority of the steering committee, a team is not to attend the oral round or view the memorials of another team they are scheduled to compete against.

9.2 During the semi-finals and finals of the competition, memorials will be exchanged between competing teams. All forms of scouting or advanced knowledge of the memorials of the opposing team are prohibited.

9.3 The semi-finals and finals of the competition are open to the public who can sit as the audience and watch the moot court proceedings. However, verbal and/or non-verbal communication between oralists and the court audience is strictly prohibited.

9.4 As oralists thrive on teamwork, it is expected that they consult with themselves (if need be). This should not be done in a disruptive manner but with respect to court decorum and etiquette.

## **Part Four**

### **10 Oral Pleadings**

10.1 Pleadings will take this format- Applicant team, Respondent team, and rebuttal by Applicant team.

10.2 Time allocated to both oralists for oral pleadings shall not be more than 30 minutes during the preliminary rounds, quarterfinals, and semi-finals.

10.3 No team will plead for longer than 35 minutes during the final round.

10.4 Only the applicant has the right to rebuttal, and such rebuttals may not exceed 5 minutes.

10.5 The court clerk shall serve as timekeepers and will have indicators reminding oralists of the time they have left for their pleadings.

10.6 The clerk's stopwatch will be paused when judges pose questions at the oralist. However, time taken to respond to such questions will be taken off the allotted time.

10.7 Each team is at liberty to indicate to the clerk how it wishes to allocate its time at the start of an oral round.

10.8 Oralists are required to strictly follow the time limits.

## **11 Scope of Pleadings**

The scope of a team's oral pleading is not limited to the scope of its submitted memorial. However, scope of the Applicant's rebuttal is limited to the scope of the Respondent's oral pleadings.

## **12 Ex-parte Proceedings**

12.1 An ex parte round will be held where:

- a. after the balloting exercise, a team is not drawn against a competitor because of the odd number of participating schools;
- b. a team fail to arrive or show up for a scheduled round, the president judge of the court shall report the matter to the steering committee. After waiting for at least five minutes, the president judge is at liberty to allow the round proceed ex parte.

12.2 During ex parte proceedings, the team on ground presents its oral pleading and same is marked and graded by the judges. The team that fails to arrive/show up for the scheduled round will forfeit the points allotted to the rounds.

12.3 The president judge (after due consultation with the steering committee) is at liberty to determine:

- a. if a late team should be absolved midstream pleadings when exparte proceedings had started.
- b. if an absentee team can be rescheduled for an additional round where good cause is presented necessitating their absence or tardiness.

## **Part Five**

### **Advanced Rounds**

13.1 The rules guiding oral pleadings and adherence to time limitation under part four shall be applicable at all rounds of the competition (the preliminary and advanced rounds).

13.2 Teams who made it to the quarter final, semi-final and final rounds will be scored exclusively on their oral pleadings.

13.3 The top teams determined by highest ranking scores will advance to the next stage of the competition.

13.4 Lots are drawn to determine which teams appear against each other, and which team appears for which side of the argument during a particular round.

13.5 The semifinal and final rounds are in persons round and only teams who qualify will be invited to physically participate in Lagos State.

## **Part Six**

### **14. Confidentiality of Teams Identity**

- 14.1 The identity of each team shall be kept confidential. Upon registration, each team shall be assigned an official Team Number. For the duration of the moot competition, each team shall be identified only by that team number.
- 14.2 During the rounds, teams appearing before judges shall do away with their identity cards, or any other identifying mark. This is to ensure that the judges do not know which school a team represents.

### **15. Audio and Video Recording and Transmission**

- 15.1 No audio or video recording or transmission of an in-person moot is permitted without the advance permission of the entire panel of judges, the two participating Teams, and the Steering Committee.

### **16. Electronic Devices in Courtrooms**

- 16.1 Oralists may not operate mobile phones, laptop computers or similar electronic devices including but not limited to those which are internet-enabled or data-capable, or have instant messaging capabilities.
- 16.2 All such devices should be turned off and removed from sight as soon as court session starts and should remain so until the court rises.

### **17. Disqualification and Penalties**

- 17.1 The Steering Committee has the power to penalize or disqualify a team found guilty of gross violations of these rules.
- 17.2 Judges may also sanction teams appearing in their court for various infractions bordering on scouting, tardiness, absenteeism, etc. This power is discretionary and should be used judiciously
- 17.3 Penalties imposed by the judges or steering committee can be in the form of subtraction of awarded marks not exceeding 20 marks from a team.
- 17.4 Teams are at liberty to report any alleged infraction to the steering committee. The accused team and the team initiation the complaint will be given fair hearing to make their complaints or enter into their defence (as the case may be).
- 17.5 The steering committee may disqualify a team or impose penalties for behaviours bothering on poor sportsmanship (but not limited to):
  - a. Late submission of memorials
  - b. Scouting
  - c. Use of mobile devices

- d. Verbal and nonverbal communications during oral pleadings between oralists and any other person (other than the judges)
- e. Submitting frivolous and unsubstantiated complaints
- f. Fighting

### **18. Interpretation of Rules**

- 18.1 During the Competition, any dispute that arises during the Competition that concerns the interpretation and application of these rules, or the general administration of the Competition, will be resolved by the Steering Committee.
- 18.2 All decisions of the Steering Committee concerning questions of the interpretation and application of rules are final and dispositive.
- 18.3 The Steering Committee, in interpreting the Official Rules, may promulgate such other measures as may be deemed advisable for the orderly conduct of the Competition, provided that these measures do not violate the spirit of these Official Rules.