

Association for Practical and Professional Ethics
Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl®

Regional Rules 2025



appeieb.org

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Note: For the Procedural and Scoring Rules for the Regional competitions, please see the Rules for the 2025 APPE IEB® National Competition.

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Governance and Operational Guidelines for Regional Ethics Bowl Competitions

Rule Regarding Organizational Responsibility for Regional Bowls

So as to be eligible to be a feeder competition to the APPE IEB®, Regional Competitions must conform to the rules of the APPE IEB®, but otherwise regions are solely responsible for organizing and conducting their bowls.

Rule Regarding Regional Cap Size

Regions should decide on the cap number for their region and clearly state it in their regional rules, as well as communicating it to the Ethics Bowl chair. If there are more interested schools than can be accommodated by a given region, regions are encouraged to consider rules regarding the number of teams per school and to communicate the possible need for a new region to the Ethics Bowl chair.

Rule on Required Regional Competition Information

At all regional competitions, the organizer(s) of the event must make explicit prior to the beginning of the competition all scoring rules, including, but not limited to: how the winners of matches are determined, and how teams are ranked for determining which teams earn bids to nationals. In the event that rankings are used to determine which teams advance beyond preliminary rounds, the method by which teams are ranked, must also be made explicit prior to the beginning of the competition.

Rule on Conflicts of Interest

- a. Whenever possible coaches should not serve as judges in competitions in which their institution is competing, but they cannot serve in a match in which their team is participating.
- b. Whenever possible, undergraduates should not serve as judges in competitions in which their institution is competing, but they cannot serve in a match in which a team from their institution is participating.

Case Writing

In order for the National Case Writing Committee to have sufficient time to prepare cases for the national competition, the regional case writing committee should have a complete list of case topics ready no later than May 10th.

Case Pairing

Cases are not to be paired on the basis of topic, but may be paired at the discretion of the competition's organizers on the basis of other factors, such as complexity of cases, etc.

Important Dates

Regional bowls must be held in time for teams to accept an invitation to the national bowl by December 15. Teams must confirm by this date or risk losing their space.

Regional Registration opens each year on the Wednesday after Labor Day.

The initial registration period lasts for three (3) weeks. During this period, each school may register up to two teams (as determined by their regional organizer) in their qualifying region. After the three-week initial registration period ends, additional teams may be invited to register, subject to space availability and in accordance with the regional waitlist rules.

All regional registration closes 10 days prior to the date of the first regional competition of the season.

Qualifying Rules for Teams to Advance from Regional Bowls to the National Bowl

Thirty-six schools compete in the national bowl. Each regional bowl receives bids to the national bowl based on its proportion of the overall number of schools participating.

For the mechanics of bid allocation, see the appendix.

Rule on Appeals and Certification of Regional Bowl Results

a. If a coach of a team believes there to have been an error that resulted in change in the standings that impacts advancing to a later round of a regional competition, the coach needs to bring that to the attention of the moderator or rules official for the regional immediately. Once the next round of competition begins, the results of the preceding round become official.

b. If, after the competition is over, a coach discovers an error that (a) directly impacts the teams qualifying for the APPE IEB®, and (b) can be corrected in an unambiguous fashion, then the coach may notify the rules official for the region within one week of the end of the competition.

c. If, during that same time period, the organizers of a regional realize a mistake was made impacting the teams that would qualify to the APPE IEB®, they will notify the region of the change of qualifying teams.

d. The announcement of the teams that will qualify from a region to the IEB are unofficial for the week following the competition and become official after that week, unless there is a change based on the above.

Rule on the Timing of Rules Changes

Changes to the regional rules for a given year are binding on the regions, if put in place prior to July 15 of that year. Changes implemented after July 15 in a given year will be binding on the regions for the following year. Regional Organizers have the option of adopting rules put in place after July 15 for a given year.

Eligibility and Participation Rules for Regional and National Ethics Bowl Competitions

Rules for School Eligibility

A school may send more than two teams to a regional bowl only under the following conditions:

1. the regional competition organizers approve, and
2. schools with fewer teams are not denied participation.

There is no longer a distinction between linked and unlinked teams. A school may earn at most one bid to nationals in a given year. Teams at nationals must be composed entirely of eligible

students (see the Rules for Student Eligibility), but need not be composed of students who participated in the regional competition in which the bid was earned.

Rule for Student Eligibility

Members of a school's team at the national competition must have been undergraduates at the time of the regional competition in which the school qualified for the national competition. Where "undergraduate" is defined for the purposes of the Ethics Bowl as "someone who is enrolled at the time of the regional competition and has never been enrolled in a graduate program that is not a joint graduate/undergraduate program, such as a joint BA/MA program."

Students who are not enrolled at the time of the national competition due to academic disciplinary reasons imposed by their school, such as suspension, expulsion, etc., are not eligible to compete at the national competition.

Students who have received a bachelor's degree by the time of the regional ethics bowl competition are not eligible to participate in a regional ethics bowl with the following exception: students who received a bachelor's degree within the past year and are currently enrolled in another bachelor's program will be allowed to compete.

Rules for Participating in Multiple Regional Bowls

Teams may compete in more than one regional bowl, provided:

- a) this will not displace other teams who wish to compete and,
- b) they declare in advance which bowl they wish to use for the purposes of qualification for the national bowl (teams may only attempt to qualify at one regional).

Therefore, every team must specify at the time of registration for each bowl whether they will be using this regional to qualify for the national bowl. If not, then they may be assigned a lower priority for acceptance to ensure the maximum numbers of teams who wish to advance have a chance to do so. See the following rule for exceptions to this rule.

Rule on Participation in the Two-Year Bowl

Schools participating in the Two-Year bowl may attempt to qualify for nationals at both the two-year bowl and at one other regional. The Two-Year bowl is to receive one bid to nationals. In the event that the winner has earned a bid in another region at the time of the Two-Year bowl, then the highest ranked school that has not already earned a bid to nationals would receive the bid.

Rule Regarding Disqualified Teams

If a team is found to have violated a rule that the competition organizer finds to merit disqualification from a match, even if that finding comes after the match is over, the team will be disqualified from the round. Teams facing a team that is disqualified from a match will be awarded a win in that match, with a judge majority of 2-1, and a point differential of 0.

Rule Regarding Official College Representatives for Teams

The person listed as 'sponsor' on the registration for the APPE IEB® Championship is considered to be responsible for decisions relating to the team and is understood to represent the school in all matters related to the team. This person is responsible for ensuring all members of the team are eligible to compete and for accepting or rejecting the team's invitation to the APPE IEB® Championship.

Rule Regarding Extra Fees for Large Teams

The registration fee for the APPE IEB® Championship covers the first eight members of a team. (Members include competitors and coaches.) There will be an additional per person fee of \$15 for each member of a team beyond eight.

Bid Allocation Process for the APPE Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl

1. Bid Awards

The APPE IEB® Chair will award 35 bids to the National Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl each year.

An additional 36th bid will be held in reserve and may be awarded under special circumstances, including:

- A team was mistakenly denied a bid due to an error in the regional competition; or
- Other extenuating circumstances arise that the Chair, in consultation with the Chair's Advisory Committee and the Chair of the Rules Committee, finds compelling.

If no such issue arises, the 36th bid will be awarded to the team that would have qualified under the standard allocation formula. The Chair will report the allocation of the wild card bid—and the rationale behind it—to the IEB Council to ensure transparency.

2. How Bids Are Calculated

A. Determine Schools-Per-Bid Ratio

1. Calculate the total number of distinct schools participating across all regional competitions.
2. Divide that number by 35 (the number of available bids). This gives the schools-per-bid ratio.

. Calculate Each Region's Bid Count

1. Divide the number of schools attempting to qualify in each region by the schools-per-bid ratio.
2. Round the result to the nearest whole number to determine how many bids that region receives.
3. Each region is guaranteed at least one bid.

3. Handling Overages and Shortages Due to Rounding

A. If the total number of bids assigned falls short of 35:

- The remaining bids will be awarded to the region(s) that best preserve the smallest gap between the highest and lowest chances of qualifying.
- If multiple regions meet this criterion, the additional bid goes to the region with the lowest chance of advancing.

B. If the total number of bids assigned exceeds 35:

- The excess bid(s) will be removed from region(s) in a way that best preserves the narrowest range of qualifying chances.
- If multiple regions qualify, the bid will be removed from the region with the highest chance of advancing.

C. Tiebreakers (used when regions are equally ranked under the above criteria):

1. Region with the higher number of participating schools
2. Coin toss

4. Census and Reporting Requirements

Ten days prior to the first regional competition of the season, each region must report to the IEB Chair the number of:

- Schools attempting to qualify
- Teams registered

If a region fails to report by the deadline, the IEB Chair will assign bids using a conservative estimate based on prior participation data.

5. Vacated Bids

- If a team that earned a bid is unable to attend the national competition, the bid will be offered to the next highest-ranked team from that regional bowl.
- Each regional competition must use scoring rules that allow for clear ranking of teams from top to bottom to enable this replacement process.

Role and Responsibilities of Regional Representatives to the IEB Board

Regional Representatives serve as voting members on the IEB Board. They are considered the official liaison between a region and the IEB. They are in charge of issues relating to their regional bowl, including communication with teams in the region, the implementation of regional rules, and the selection of hosts for the bowl. The regional representative does not need to be the host of the regional bowl.

- Regional Representatives will serve three-year terms, and may serve an unlimited number of these terms. (A year is understood here as a calendar year, so someone elected Dec. 1st 2018, will have a term serving 2019–2021.)
- Elections for the Regional Representative position shall take place between Nov. 1st and Dec. 31st of the year in which their term ends. If a new representative is selected, this person officially assumes their role at the next IEB Breakfast (held during the APPE conference).

- There shall be a two-week nomination period prior to the election of the representative.
- The election dates, and nomination period shall be publicized to the region and also communicated to the IEB, so that the information can be placed on the Ethics Bowl website.
- Regions can run the election in whichever method they choose, as long as the process is clearly communicated to all involved, and to the IEB Board Chair. However, the IEB Rules Committee recommends that the current regional representative selects an election chair to run the process, to maximize the transparency of the process.
- All schools who have competed in a given region at least once during the current three-year term of the regional representative are eligible to participate in the election. The person voting on behalf of the school may be one of the team's current coaches or the team's sponsor.

Permitted Rule Variations and Experimental Practices in Regional Ethics Bowl Competitions

Regional bowls are expected to use the national bowl's rules, guidelines, and scoring rubric, with the following exceptions:

1. Regional bowls are not required to conduct a straight elimination match of the top scoring teams in the three morning matches, as provided for under the national rules. However, regional bowls must adopt scoring rules that enable them to rank teams from top to the bottom.
2. Minor adjustments to timing and other rules are allowed without prior approval, but require notification to the IEB Executive Board, and, where appropriate, post-bowl reports about the effects of these adjustments. Pre-approved variations include:
 - a. The maximum amount of team members that may be seated for a match may be adjusted (especially as the ability to fit people at tables may vary by region).
 - b. The APPE IEB® National Competition Rules note that the end of time for any portion of the match will be a "hard stop", wherein the moderator will simply say "that's time" when time expires. Regional bowls may determine for themselves how to deal with the expiration of time during a round (for example, allowing a team to finish a sentence).
 - c. Initial presentations may run from 7 to 12 minutes.
 - d. Commentary on initial presentations may run from 5 to 8 minutes.
 - e. Ratio of presenting team to opposing team scores may not exceed 5:1.
 - f. Judges' Q&A may be expanded from 10 up to 15 minutes.

- g. Response to commentary may be shortened in favor of lengthening the judges' Q&A period.
 - h. Rules regarding the number of members of a team that may speak during any particular part of the round may be changed without prior consent.
 - i. Regional bowls may allow one minute for initial conferral, and may have any policy they deem appropriate on when teams may use scratch paper, as long as notes are not in from the outside.
 - j. The winner of a match may be determined by which team received the highest points rather than the majority of judges.
 - k. Adding a section to their score sheets where judges may deduct points for things such as personal attacks on the opposing team, taking hostile tones, etc.
 - l. Shifting points from initial presentation and adding points to response to Judges' question or counter-rebuttal.
 - m. Rules regarding what to do in the event that one of more teams fails to show up is the discretion of the regional organizer.
3. Experiments involving more significant changes require approval from the IEB Executive Board and require reports about the effects of these changes. The regional bowls can serve as test beds for useful experimentation, with successful experiments ultimately being adopted by the national bowl (and therefore the other regional bowls). However, changes that alter the essential nature of the event as an academic competition will be turned down by the IEB Executive Board.

Guidelines and Protocols for Virtual Regional Ethics Bowl Competitions

Team Setup for Virtual Competitions

Teams may compete from a shared physical location (such as a classroom, meeting room, or team space) or from multiple remote locations, depending on institutional policy and team preference.

If competing from a shared location:

- Team members may sit together in the same room.
- Teams may use a single device with a shared camera and microphone, provided all team members are clearly visible and audible to the moderator and judges throughout the match.
- Teams are responsible for ensuring that the setup allows for individual speakers to be identified, and that it does not interfere with the fairness or clarity of the match.

If competing from separate locations:

- Each team member must use their own electronic device with an enabled camera and microphone.
- All participants must remain visible and audible for the duration of the match.

The use of headsets is permitted in both settings. Regional organizers may provide additional technical requirements to ensure consistency and fairness across all teams.

The Honor System and the Ethics Bowl

On an honor system and in the spirit of the Ethics Bowl, the following things are prohibited. Any violations of these rules will result in the forfeiture of the match:

- Coaches communicating in any way with their team during a match.
- Team members not seated for the match communicating in any way with the seated members of the team during a match.
- Outside observers communicating in any way with team members during a match.
- Team members using pre-typed or pre-written notes during the match.
- Team members using phones or any other devices other than the one being used for the match.

Note: If a coach of a team becomes aware of a violation of any of the above rules by their own team, they are expected to self-report the violation.

Teams during a match may:

- Pass notes to each other using the regional platform (e.g., Zoom) private chat function.
- Use scratch paper to take notes during the match.

Conferral Period Adjustments

- Conferral periods may be extended by one minute each.
- The timer for any given period of a match should only begin when all participants are in the right place.

Virtual Time Warnings

Whenever a team is not able to see and hear the moderator (which would most likely be the case during conferral periods), the moderator will post time warnings in the virtual space where the team can see them.

Webcams

All team members, judges, and moderators are required to have their webcams turned on during all parts of the match. If a participant is having bandwidth problems which results in the video not working, they must inform the moderator. In such a case the moderator may allow

them to continue competing with their webcam turned off.

Technical Adjustments

The following adjustments are recommended for regions competing virtually, but not required.

a. The “Back-Up Judge”

- Scores of the back-up judge will only count if they are needed to step in, and the back-up judge may only ask questions if they have already replaced one of the other judges.
- In the event that regions cannot recruit enough back-up judges and there is a loss of connectivity by a judge, the round may continue with only two judges. The match can be decided by total points rather than number of judges.
- In the event that two judges lose connectivity the moderator will suspend the match, and the match will be rescheduled, and if possible, with different cases.

b. Moderator Training

- Moderators must undergo moderator training, as well as training in the use of the virtual platform the host of the competition is utilizing. Some part of this training must take place before the day of the competition.

c. The technical “time out”

- The moderator may call a “time out” at any point of the match if it appears connectivity is impacting the ability of participants to hear and be heard.
- The moderator will stop the timer, and will resume the match when the matter has been resolved to the moderator’s satisfaction.

d. Suspending a Match

If connectivity issues impact a match to such a large degree that there is no way to salvage a competitive experience for the two teams, the moderator may suspend the match, and the match will be rescheduled, and if possible, with different cases.

Connectivity issues include:

- Loss of more than one judge
- Loss of the moderator
- Loss of multiple team members on either team
- Platform failure

e. Moderator Check-Ins

Moderators should, if they think there was a connectivity issue in any part of the match, proactively check in with participants to make sure everyone was able to hear the speakers. The timer should be paused during these check-ins and if anything needs to be repeated it can.

f. Security and Privacy

Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure security and privacy on the platform used. At a minimum, organizers should follow the best security practices outlined by the platform provider and their school’s IT department.

Other Suggestions for Online Regions

The following are not rules but are guidelines provided by the rules committee to help ensure that a fun and competitive experience is had by all participants in virtual Ethics Bowl matches.

- Whenever possible, regions are encouraged to have “dress rehearsals” so that all participants are able to experience the virtual environment before the start of actual matches.
- Online regions are encouraged to craft a policy for participation in their regional competition such that priority is given in the following manner:
 - Priority is given to teams for whom the regional competition would be their closest regional event, were the event to be held face-to-face, or is the regional event they would most likely attend if the event were to be held face-to-face.
 - Priority is given to the “first team” entered by a school. In other words, hosts should accommodate the maximum number of schools first, and only then allow second teams from schools.
 - Priority is given to teams for whom the region is the one through which a team is attempting to qualify for the APPE IEB® National Championship. Teams not using the region for qualifying for the APPE IEB® National Championship but want to register for practice purposes will be given the lowest priority. (Teams can only use one region in attempting to officially qualify for nationals.)