



# WSDC 2022: Conferral Judging (Official Guidance Document)

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## I. Existing WSDC judging procedure, and how conferral departs

	Previous system: Independent ballots	WSDC 2022 on: Conferral judging
Step 1:	Take time, consider the debate carefully and in a great level of detail. Arrive at a decision	Use your notes to arrive at an early decision
Step 2:	Fill out your ballot, and submit the ballot	Discuss the debate with the room and seek clarification where necessary for your verdict to be clearer
Step 3:	Briefly discuss your reasons for the decision with the Chair/wings	Consider once again, change your decision if necessary. Inform the Chair of your final decision, and then fill the ballot and submit
Step 4:	Chair (in most cases) delivers the OA	Chair (in most cases) delivers the OA

The primary departure from the previous system is the addition of a discussion element **before** final decisions are made, allowing judges to change their initial decisions if needed.

## II. Time overview for the conferral process

The entire process end-to-end should not take more than 60 minutes (1 hr)

-Debate Ends-

- 0-5 min: Arrive at preliminary verdicts (5 min)
- 5-23 min: Engage in the conferral discussion (12-18 min)
- 23-28 min: Rethink, make final decision, fill ballots (5 min)
- 28-32 min: Chairs clarify for any OA additions (5 min)
- 32-40 min: Deliver OA to the room (8 min)
- 40-60: Team/speaker specific feedback + buffers (20 min)

## III. Purpose of conferral judging and example questions:

The primary purpose of the discussion is to help the judges share and clarify their thoughts about the debate before completing their mark-sheets. The purpose is not to convince/persuade other judges to make the same decision as you.

In conferral judging, we are **agnostic about agreement on the decision itself**, but not about whether you have the information you need to make that decision.

There are two types of additional information we believe judges may be able to seek out:

1. *Clarifications around the WSDC rules:* Questions pertaining to any WSDC technical rules including but not limited to:
  - a. Point X was made for the first time by the third speaker. Are we allowed to credit it?
  - b. Is it acceptable that Team Proposition's set-up/model was only clarified at 2P?
  - c. Can Team Opposition run a countermodel in a prefers motion?
2. *Clarifications about more subjective elements of the debate round:* Questions that are

specific to the substantive contributions and engagement in that particular debate. These may be of two further types:

- a. Questions attempting to ascertain or clarify 'what happened'. These may attempt to double check tracking, confirm that a judge understood a point correctly, etc.
  - i. Can I confirm that the response to idea X was delivered first in the 2Opp speech, when they said Y?
  - ii. Proposition set up 3 levers to the principle - A, B, and C. Is that correct?
- b. Questions attempting to ascertain 'how to evaluate'. In particularly close debates, these may attempt to understand how to compare contributions, or weigh up engagement.
  - i. Team X has won issue Y, but Team A has won issue B. Neither team explained whether Y or A is more important. How can we ascertain this?
  - ii. Third opposition has responded in X manner - how can we evaluate if proposition has built implicit defences in their case to deal with this?

Conferral judging aims to strengthen a judge's information systems over and above their existing, clear tracking of the debate. Judges should not to ask for entire speeches/arguments and rely on other judges.

#### **IV. Guidance to chairs on conducting a conferral discussion**

##### **CHAIRS SHOULD ACTIVELY TIME THE ENTIRE CONFERRAL SECTION**

1. Give judges a couple of minutes right after the round ends to use their notes and arrive at a preliminary verdict. At the end of this, request them to share the preliminary verdict with you privately. This step should not take more than five minutes total.
2. Announce the overall decision as it stands and mention who split in cases of splits
3. Open the floor for a guided discussion after stating the purpose of this discussion - that it is not to convince or arrive at a consensus, but to offer additional clarification, information, or perspective as necessary
4. Before entering a more substantive discussion and evaluation of the debate, invite any questions anyone may have that they are seeking clarity over - this applies in particular to clarifications about the rules, or judges wanting to confirm or double check their understanding of the facts in the debate, e.g.: teams' arguments, when a piece of rebuttal was delivered first, etc. More evaluation based questions will likely surface during the discussion
5. Arrive at the crucial issues within the round and an understanding of the quality and closeness of the round. Some ways to do this:
  - a. "I thought there were X important questions/issues in the round. Does anyone have additions to these?"
  - b. "Can we each list what we found are the important issues deciding the round?"
  - c. "How close was this round? Did you think it was average, above average, or below average overall?"
6. Invite the wings to contribute to the discussion by articulating how they viewed/evaluated each clash:
  - a. In cases where the decision is unanimous, you may do this by getting the wings to track and explain a clash each live.

- b. In cases where the decision is split:
  - i. Wing splits: Invite the panelist in the minority to share briefly what they thought the deciding factors in the round were. Ideally, have this done first so they are able to share their perspective before there is some influence from the majority opinion.
  - ii. Chair splits: Invite contribution from both wings on clashes similar to unanimous calls, but then provide perspective for the other side briefly on points of departure by calling it out clearly and explaining why you saw the issue differently

This process should ideally not take more than 18 minutes (~4-6 minutes per judge with some buffer), and the judge giving the OA should be making notes that would help their OA

7. At the end of 15 minutes, signal to the room that deliberation is coming to an end within the next 3 minutes and indicate that judges have to wrap up
8. At the end of 18 minutes, ask judges to take a moment to reflect on whether they would use the information and perspective available to them to decide differently. This should not take more than 5 minutes.
9. Collect their final decisions after this, and have them fill out ballots. Scores are to be decided independently and not through conferral. However, judges may use their understanding of round quality based on the previous discussion to score
10. Take a minute to make any edits to your OA notes to reflect the new decision if needed

## **V. Guidance for all participants in conferral discussions**

1. Enter the discussion with openness: Avoid being obstinate or unwilling to listen to what other judges are saying. There is no shame in changing your decision if you feel that additional information or perspective changes the way you view the debate
2. Be specific in your questions: As much as is possible, any clarifications should be targeted and specific, rather than open ended. Judges are expected to avoid asking 'What did X say in their second argument?', and instead play back their understanding of the second argument and ask for additions if there are any
3. Use language that makes space for, and facilitates discussion: Phrase sentences that indicate that you are sharing opinions, rather than sharing objective fact. Avoid "I think there is no way X won", or "This is such an obvious win to Y"
4. Spend more time on contentious, important areas: Owing to time constraints, all participants are expected to spend a majority of the discussion on clear and specific areas that are more difficult to evaluate **and** matter more to the overall decision of the debate, rather than areas that the judges broadly agree on, or may have contention, but do not contribute as much to deciding the round's winner
5. Avoid arguments/heated back and forths: Be consistently aware that you are in a 'conferral' rather than a 'consensus' discussion. Receiving information to enhance your decision making process is more important than the end state of the decision itself.



## VI. Differences between independent ballots, conferral judging, and consensus judging

Area	Independent (AP)	Independent (ex-WSDC, Australs)	Consensus (BP)	Conferral (WSDC 2022)
Timing and purpose of discussion	Low (0-2 min): After ballots are submitted if at all as a formality	Medium (5-10 min): After ballots are submitted to improve OAs	High (~15-20 min): Before ballots are submitted to reach consensus	Medium-High (12-18 min) Before ballots are submitted to expand information available to judges
Importance of discussion	Low: Does not feature strongly as each judge delivers a separate OA to the teams that is evaluated	Medium: Only matters to the extent that the person delivering the OA collects opinions	High: The discussion is the primary method of evaluating who won the debate	Medium-High: The discussion can increase information, and change the minds of judges and the outcome, as it is done prior to ballot submission. However, it is not the method of evaluating who won
Approach to divergence	Only matters to the teams and not to judges themselves	Matters in as much as the person delivering the OA should fold dissenting opinions in	Triggers in depth discussion to attempt to resolve this divergence, where judges try and convince the other judge to move towards a common way of viewing the debate	Room acknowledges the alternative ways to view the debate, and the explanations of these by judges may influence judges to independently change their decision or not
Likelihood of dissents	Relatively high	Relatively high	Relatively low	Unclear - not wedded to the final decision
No. of OAs	Three separate	One OA	One OA	One OA



## VII. FAQs (TBD as the CAP receives community questions)