

# **GUIDANCE FOR ADJUDICATORS**

Note: This guidance applies directly to the IPSC judging process according to the specific IPSC judging criteria. However, this guidance should prove useful to national competition judges and organisers wishing to train judges. Although national competitions may devise their own criteria and judging processes, the ESU recommends sticking broadly to the below guidance.

#### **General Overview**

Participants and spectators must be confident in the competence of the adjudicators if they are to accept their decisions and take their advice on board. For that reason, adjudication should be as professional as possible at all stages of the competition.

At the IPSC, the adjudication panels for both of the heats are made up of public speaking and debating coaches, university students who have competed in public speaking and debating competitions at school and university level, and IPSC alumni (i.e. those who have competed in the IPSC in previous years). The adjudication panel for the grand final of the IPSC is made up of accomplished public speakers and communications experts, many of whom use their oratorical and persuasive skills as part of their professional lives (e.g. TV and radio presenters, lawyers etc.).

At all stages of the competition, adjudicators should be mindful of the distinction between a prepared speech and an impromptu speech. Specific guidelines for adjudicating both types of speech are set out separately below. However, the following overarching principles should be borne in mind by adjudicators when adjudicating either type of public speech:

Appearance – Does the speaker have a confident and commanding presence on the platform or at the podium? A good public speaker will utilise body language, facial expression, eye contact and gestures effectively to engage the audience and the adjudicators.

**Audibility** – Can the speaker be heard? A good public speaker will speak slowly, clearly and will utilise a range of verbal skills such as varying their pace, pitch and tone of voice to maintain the attention of the audience and the adjudicators.

Argument – Has the speaker delivered a speech, which is persuasive, informative, inspiring and/or entertaining? A good speech will be well structured, the arguments will be presented in a coherent and logical manner, and the content of each argument will be supported by some form of evidence or analysis.

Audience – Has the speaker effectively engaged with and built a rapport with the audience? A good public speaker will utilise a range of verbal, non-verbal and linguistic skills, as well as the structure and content of their speech, to maintain the attention and interest of the audience.

Adaptability – Has the speaker demonstrated an ability to think on their feet? A good public speaker will not sound over-rehearsed, and will demonstrate adaptability by (for example) pausing their speech to allow for an unanticipated interruption (e.g. applause or laughter from the audience), making a spontaneous or unscripted comment or argument where appropriate and/or responding to questions confidently and without recourse to the text of the original speech.



# **Prepared Speeches**

Notwithstanding the general principles laid out above, when adjudicating a prepared speech, adjudicators should consider the guidance for speakers for prepared speeches set out on pages 11-22 of this handbook (and should consider those pages part of the adjudication guidelines for prepared speeches).

The key point for adjudicators to bear in mind for the heats and the grand final is that all speakers will have had a considerable amount of time to interpret the theme, choose a topic and a title, research the topic, write a speech and practice delivering that speech.

It should be evident from the speech that the speaker has researched and thought about the chosen topic, and the arguments in the speech should be supported by an appropriate level of evidence and/or analysis. It should be evident from the question period that the speaker has a reasonable level of background and/or ancillary knowledge relating to the topic. Speakers who demonstrate an ability to reinforce their arguments by reference to additional evidence or analysis, not contained in their speech, should be rewarded.

It should also be evident from the speech that the speaker has not learnt their speech word for word. Speakers who demonstrate a sense of spontaneity, while also appearing prepared (making effective use of notes if necessary), should be rewarded.

Finally, the IPSC is not an English language exam. Even when adjudicating speakers who have had a considerable amount of time to prepare their speeches; adjudicators should not penalise speakers for occasional grammatical errors, mispronunciations etc.

# Impromptu Speeches

Notwithstanding the general principles laid out above, when adjudicating an impromptu speech adjudicators should consider, in particular, the guidance for speakers for impromptu speeches set out on pages 23-24 of this handbook (and should consider those pages part of the adjudication guidelines for impromptu speeches).

The key point for adjudicators to bear in mind for the impromptu speech stage is that speakers have only had 15 minutes to choose their topic (from a possible list of three) and prepare their speech on that topic. It should be evident from the speech that the speaker has made an effort to do something interesting or original with the topic.

Speakers who deliver a well-structured speech in a confident and stylistic way should be rewarded. It should also be evident from the speech that the speaker has made an effort to introduce some examples, analogies or analysis in support of their speech; but adjudicators should not penalise speakers for lack of specific knowledge on the topic.

It should be evident from the speech that the speaker has not attempted to write out their speech, word for word, during the 15 minutes preparation period. Speakers who demonstrate a sense of confidence and style, while also making effective use of notes should be rewarded.

Finally, the IPSC is not an English language exam. When adjudicating speakers who have had a limited amount of time to prepare their speeches, in particular; adjudicators should not penalise speakers for occasional grammatical errors, mispronunciations etc.



# **Marking Schemes**

### **Prepared Speeches**

Expression and Delivery – 35 marks Reasoning and Evidence – 35 marks Organisation and Prioritisation – 15 marks Listening and Response – 15 marks

# **Impromptu Speeches**

Expression and Delivery – 40 marks Reasoning and Analysis – 40 marks Organisation and Prioritisation – 20 marks

The marking schemes are designed to assist adjudicators when assessing the different aspects or features of a speech (adjudicators should consider the relevant marking scheme in conjunction with the speaker scale).

Adjudicators should not feel constrained by their initial allocation of marks. Adjudication is an inherently subjective pursuit, which cannot be reduced to a purely mathematical process. It requires careful consideration of the discrete categories within the marking scheme, coupled with an ability to balance the strengths and weaknesses of different speakers in different areas.

Adjudicators must engage in a discussion with the rest of the adjudication panel after the competition, justifying their own opinion and allocation of marks, and considering the opinion and allocation of marks of other adjudicators (in an attempt to reach consensus on the rankings).

The speaker scale is designed to assist adjudicators when assessing a speaker's overall performance (adjudicators should consider the speaker scale in conjunction with the relevant marking scheme).

# **Speaker Scale**

#### Excellent - 90-100 marks

Marks should be awarded within this range for a speech that would almost certainly be the winning speech at the grand final of the IPSC. Such a speech should be delivered flawlessly, arguments should be structured to perfection, and the arguments presented should be compelling and supported by comprehensive evidence and/or analysis. The speaker should be uniquely confident and stylistic.

## Very Good - 80-90 marks

Marks should be awarded within this range to a speaker who would probably be one of the six speakers in the grand final of the IPSC. Such a speech should be delivered to a very high standard, arguments should be very well structured, and the arguments presented should be supported by solid evidence and/or analysis. The speaker should display confidence and style.

#### Good - 70-80 marks

Marks should be awarded within this range to a speaker who would probably be one of top 20 speakers of the IPSC. Such a speech should be delivered to a high standard, arguments should be structured, and arguments should be supported by good evidence and/or analysis.

# Average - 60-70 marks

Marks should be awarded within this range to a speaker who gave a reasonable performance, but had a minor fault in one of the categories of the marking scheme.

## Below Average - 50-60 marks

Marks should be awarded within this range to a speaker who had minor faults in multiple categories of the marking scheme or a significant fault in one of the categories of the marking scheme.

### Poor - 40-50 marks

Marks should be awarded within this range to a speaker who had significant faults in multiple categories of the marking scheme.





# **Feedback**

The IPSC is an invaluable opportunity for participants to be exposed to a range of world-class speakers and adjudicators, providing them with the chance to learn new skills and improve their public speaking techniques. Adjudicators play an integral part in that educational process, by providing constructive feedback to speakers after the competition.

When giving feedback, adjudicators should bear in mind that each speaker is a national champion and has therefore achieved huge success already by earning their place in the competition. Adjudicators should also bear in mind that, even though there is a certain extent to which adjudication is subjective and intuitive, decisions are more likely to be understood by speakers and coaches if they are justifiable by reference to the objective criteria laid out in this handbook. This also allows speakers to focus on the specific area(s) where there is room for improvement.

Adjudicating is also a valuable learning experience for public speaking and debating coaches in particular. It gives them an insight into how their own speakers can be successful from an adjudicator's point of view. It also hones their skills as coaches and enhances their ability to deconstruct and critique a speech, and give constructive feedback.

