

**NUSRL's LEGAL AID CLIENT COUNSELING
Competition**

RULES & REGULATIONS

Article 39A of the Constitution of India provides for free legal aid to the poor and weaker sections of the society and ensures justice for all. Article 14 and 22(1) of the constitution also make it obligatory for the State to ensure equality before law and a legal system which promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity to all, In 1987, the Legal Services Authorities Act was enacted by the Parliament which came into force on 9th November, 1995 with an object to establish a nationwide uniform network for providing free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society on the basis of equal opportunity. Client counseling, thus is an integrated part of legal aid. The problems shall be based on matters which come under the ambit of Legal Services Authority Act, 1987 and are relevant in providing legal aid. Participants are expected to have knowledge of social problems and laws mentioned below and any other ancillary laws and procedures:

- Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.
- Gram Nyayalaya Act.
- Protection of Women From Domestic Violence Act, 2005.
- Persons with Disabilities (Equal Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act.
- Laws relating to Marriage.
- Labour Laws.
- Consumer Protection Laws.
- And other social legislation

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The following rules and regulations shall govern the competition:

1. TEAM COMPOSITION

A team shall consist of **two participants** currently enrolled as a regular law students in any of the university. Each Team will participate in only one counseling session in preliminary rounds. Teams may not be altered after registration. [See Registration and Participation Guidelines for further details]

2. COMPETITION FORMAT

This competition is divided in three parts: (1) Consultation (2) Post-Consultation and (3) Review

CONSULTATION:

The consultation period shall be for **10 minutes** for Preliminary rounds and **15 minutes** for Final round. In the consultation period participants shall interact with the client to understand his problem.

POST CONSULTATION

In the Post Consultation period the participants may discuss with each other to analyze the problem and In the post-consultation period the participants may talk to each other loudly so as to be audible to the judges or may indirectly address them in any other

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manner.

- Participants may summarize the interview, indicate the scope of the legal work to be undertaken, and state the legal issues that should be researched. Explanation of the position or attitude taken by the students may be useful.
- If the students feel that some documents are appropriate, like a letter to the client confirming their retention as attorneys, the fee arrangement etc, or a letter to opposing counsel or to the party with whom the client is having their legal problems etc., they may dictate such a document at the post consultation stage.
- The time period for post consultation is **3 minutes** for Preliminary rounds and **5 minutes** for Final round.
- At the completion of the time period of Post-Consultation the judges shall stop the participants or signal them to stop in an obvious manner.

Failure of the participants to comply with the above rule will attract negative marking as prescribed by the Organiser to the judges.

Review

- After the completion of the Post-Consultation period the judges may question the participants on matters deliberated upon or mentioned by the participants or the client during the consultation of post-consultation period.

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- The judges may ask any question on matters deliberated upon or mentioned by the participants or the client during the consultation of post-consultation period and to test the participants understanding of the facts and/or law applicable or applied by the participants in the case.
- The time period for this session is 3 minutes for Preliminary rounds and 7 minutes for Final round and the judges may extend it by another 2 minutes at their discretion.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. **Alternative remedial actions:** Consistent with the analysis of the client's problem, developed a set of potentially effective and feasible alternatives, both legal and non-legal.
2. **Client's objectives:** Learned the client's objectives and initial expectations; modified or developed these as necessary.
3. **Description of the Problem:** Learned how the client viewed his or her situation, using a combination of listening and questioning, drawing out both information and emotions of the client, as appropriate, to develop a reasonably complete and reliable description of the problem.
4. **Effective Counseling solution:** Concluded the interview skillfully and left the client with a feeling of reasonable confidence and understanding, with appropriate reassurance, and with a clear sense of specific expectations and mutual obligations to follow.
5. **Moral and Ethical Issues:** Recognised, clarified and responded to any moral or ethical issues which may have arisen, without being prejudicial in judgments.

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- 6. Overall Rating:** Synthesizing the above criteria as relevant in an overall rating, how do you rate the client counseling?
- 7. Post-Interview Reflection:** During the follow up phase, gave evidence of having recognized their own and the client's feelings, the strengths and limitations of their interviewing and counseling skills, their handling of the substantive aspects of the client's problems (legal and non-legal), provided for an effective follow-up.
- 8. Problem Analysis:** Analysed the client's problem with creativity and from both legal and non-legal perspectives, resulting in a clear and useful formulation of the problem.
- 9. Teamwork:** As collaborating counselors, worked together as a team, with flexibility and an appropriate balance of participation.
- 10. Working Atmosphere and Professionalism :** Established the beginning of an effective professional relationship and working atmosphere and, if and when appropriate, oriented the client to the special nature of the relationship, including confidentiality, explanation of fees and responding to client's concerns, mutual obligations and rights, duration and plan of the consultation, etc., in a courteous, sensitive and professional manner.

NOTE: *The organisers hold right to change rules without prior notification.*

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