

# Oxford Intellectual Property Moot 2026: Rules

## Abbreviations and Definitions

A4	References to A4 are to include paper of similar dimensions, such as US Letter
Bench	The group of judges for a given moot round in the Oral Proceedings
Moot	The Oxford International Intellectual Property Moot 2026
OC	The Moot Organising Committee
Oral Proceedings	The oral phase of the competition, to be conducted in March 2026; entry is by invitation only, based on the results of the Written Phase
Panel	The panel of judges for submissions in the Written Phase, as appointed by the OC
Written Phase	The first stage of the Moot, in which two 3,000 word submissions must be submitted by each prospective team

## Registration and Eligibility

1. The Moot is open to students who are enrolled on a full-time or part-time basis in a higher education degree, provided that:
  - (a) such course is not a research degree in law;
  - (b) they have not been admitted or licensed to practise law in any jurisdiction; and
  - (c) they are enrolled at their institution at the date of the Oral Proceedings, or at an earlier time as permitted at the discretion of the OC.

Members of the OC are not eligible to participate as mooters.

*Note to §1: prospective entrants who have any inquiries about eligibility are advised to contact the Moot Secretary at [moot@oiprc.ox.ac.uk] at their earliest convenience. The OC has received inquiries in the past about the status of paralegals, law clerks and patent/trade mark agents. Merely being employed as a paralegal or clerk will not usually fall within the exclusion in §1, as such positions are often held prior to or without being admitted to practice. The status of patent and trade mark agents will depend on the rules in the particular jurisdiction and the OC will advise on a case-by-case basis.*

2. Any entrant into the Moot is required to declare, when registering for the Oral Proceedings, that they are eligible to compete under §1. Anyone considered by the OC to have misrepresented their eligibility will be subject to an appropriate penalty determined by the OC, which penalty may include disqualification from the competition. It is strongly recommended that those wishing to apply for discretion under §1(c) should apply in writing for such a determination prior to entering their written submissions. Such applications should be addressed to the Moot Secretary at [moot@oiprc.ox.ac.uk].
3. A team comprises two or three mooters, each eligible under §1, and each enrolled at the same university or higher education institution. Any given university or institution may only enter one team for the Moot. The same two- or three-person team must prepare the written submissions and appear in the Oral Proceedings. When emailing their written submissions to the Moot Secretary in the Written Phase, teams must include, in their covering email, the names of the two or three mooters on their team.

*Note to §3: For three-person teams, it is not necessary that all three team members speak at the Oral Proceedings.*

4. A team may be supported by a third party or parties who fulfil a mentoring or coaching role. Any such individual must not make any substantive contribution to the Moot. To illustrate, they may not contribute substantively to the preparation of written submissions nor may they contribute during Oral Proceedings. They are not required to meet the conditions of §1.
5. Entry to the Written Phase is free of charge. Each team that accepts an invitation to take part in the Oral Proceedings is required to register and pay a moot registration fee. This fee will depend on the number of mooters travelling to Oxford:

- Where **two** mooters are attending the moot, the registration fee is **£500**.
- Where **three** mooters are attending the moot, the registration fee is **£700**.

For avoidance of doubt, it is permissible for only two members of a three-person team to travel to Oxford. Given the prohibitions on electronic communications in §25, the third team member will not be able to watch the moots or otherwise play any role during the moots themselves.

This subsidized registration fee covers, amongst other things:

- registration of the team in the competition;
- dinner following the Opening Ceremony on Wednesday night;

- drinks at the Official Welcome on Thursday night;
- lunches at the preliminary rounds,
- attendance (including food and drinks) at the Tangentum lecture and dinner on Friday night; and
- attendance (including food and drinks) at the Grand Final Dinner on Saturday night.

*Note to §5: Each team will be responsible for paying its own accommodation costs. Details regarding accommodation options will be released separately, including in relation to any arrangements with host college(s). Teams will be able to book accommodation with any host college(s) when registering for the Moot.*

- 5A. Teams may be accompanied by one observer. Teams will be asked to identify whether they wish to bring an observer as part of the registration process following the release of invitations to the Oral Proceedings. If a team wishes to bring additional observers this should be requested at that stage. Agreement will be granted only if space permits. Any observers travelling with the team will be required to pay a separate registration fee, calculated on a cost-recovery basis. Details about the fee and arrangements for observers will be released separately.

*Note to §5A: For avoidance of doubt, observers are not limited to coaches and mentors. In the past teams have brought fellow students and academics who oversee the mooting programme. However, observers must not make any substantive contribution to the preparation of written submissions nor contribute during Oral Proceedings.*

6. Each team undertakes to submit all documentation in good time to meet the deadlines set out in these Rules. Additionally, each team undertakes to arrange timely payment of fees. **If a team does not complete the steps in its letter of invitation to the Oral Proceedings by the date(s) indicated in that letter, it risks forfeiting its place in the competition.** Teams are therefore advised:

- to have finances in place to support participation; and
- (for teams traveling from abroad) to have apprised themselves of the requirements to enter the UK,

prior to the sending of invitation letters by the OC.

7. A team will only be deemed to have registered for the Oral Proceedings once:
- the team registration form;
  - a mooter registration form for each team member; and
  - all the requisite fees as laid out in these Rules,

have been received.

8. Teams are entirely responsible for their own immigration arrangements. The OC can provide letters of invitation to help with visa applications, but teams are fully responsible for requesting these in good time to meet the appropriate deadlines. It is strongly recommended that such arrangements be commenced **immediately** after invitation to the Oral Proceedings.

*Note to §8: in recent moots, we observed an increase in the number of mooters experiencing issues with obtaining visas. The main issue was delay in processing, however, some mooters had their applications rejected. The OC is able to provide teams with a stamped, official letter in support of visa applications. This letter will be personalised to include the details of each mooter in the team who requires a visa, along with the standard text in relation to the moot. We advise, in the strongest possible terms, that mooters include this letter in visa applications and not merely the invitation email. Teams should be aware that the OC has no capacity (beyond providing these official letters) to support visa applications. For instance, they should not expect that the OC will be able to contact visa application centres to request expedited processing.*

9. If a team finds itself unable to participate in the Oral Proceedings, it should inform the Moot Secretary immediately. If that team has already paid registration fees, the OC may, at its discretion, refund those fees in whole or in part. The OC may also, at its discretion, allow that team to remain eligible for an award relating to written submissions.

If a team that has registered for the Oral Proceedings fails to attend the Oral Proceedings without providing any notification or explanation to the OC, it will be deemed to have withdrawn from the Moot. That team will no longer be considered for any awards, including those relating to written submissions.

10. Participation in the Oral Proceedings is by invitation only. Except as set out in this provision, and subject to the discretion of the OC, invitations will be issued on the basis of the results of the Written Phase (below, §14-§19). The total number of teams invited will be at the discretion of the OC, but is likely to be around 28 teams. The OC will also contact potential reservists. Those teams will each be asked whether they wish to be considered for an invitation to the Oral Proceedings if a place becomes available under §11.

The winner of the previous year's Canadian Fox Moot will be granted entry into the Moot, provided they meet the eligibility requirements of §1. They must, however, tender written submissions, and will accordingly be considered for awards for

such submissions alongside other entrants. They will automatically gain an invitation to the Oral Proceedings.

11. If a team invited under §10 has to withdraw from the Moot or is otherwise disqualified, one of the reserve teams under §10 may, at the discretion of the OC, be invited to the Oral Proceedings.
12. Should a member of a team have individually to withdraw from the Moot, the remaining team members may continue in the Moot (if the team originally comprised three mooters) or withdraw from the Moot (if the team originally comprised two mooters). The team may apply in writing to the OC for permission to substitute a new team member. The OC will have complete discretion in deciding whether to accept this request.

## **The Competition**

13. The competition comprises a Written Phase and Oral Proceedings.

### *Written Phase*

14. For the Written Phase, each team must prepare TWO sets of written submissions: one on behalf of the appellant and the other on behalf of the respondent. Instructions for the preparation of the written submissions accompany the problem. Additionally:
  - (a) The word count for each submission is 3,000 words, including all footnotes and headings, but excluding: (1) the cover sheet; (2) any non-substantive material in the header or footer such as page numbers; and (3) the word count (see §16). If a team exceeds the word count, any words beyond the 3,000 word limit will be ignored.
  - (b) Each submission should be formatted to include at least 1.5 spacing between lines, with document margins of at least one inch (2.54cm) on all sides. There is no prescribed font, although any type size that is smaller than Times New Roman 12 point should be avoided (except for footnotes, for which a smaller text is acceptable).
  - (c) A bibliography or separate list of authorities is not required.
  - (d) The usual rules in relation to plagiarism and good academic practice apply to the submissions. The submissions must be the expression of the team members. Where quotes are included, these must be indicated by quotation marks and a pinpoint reference given (i.e., a reference that includes the page or paragraph

number from which the quote is taken). Teams may not use artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT when drafting their submissions.

15. The written submissions must be received by the Moot Secretary via email by **10.00am on MONDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2025 (Oxford time)**. No alterations to the written submissions are permitted after this deadline. Within their written submissions, teams must identify themselves only by use of the anonymous identifier given to them in advance by the Moot Secretary. To apply for this identifier, prospective teams should email the Moot Secretary well before the submission deadline at [moot@oiprc.ox.ac.uk].

The Moot Secretary will acknowledge receipt of all written submissions by email. If a team has not received an email acknowledgement by 5.00pm on Wednesday 17 December 2025 (Oxford time), they should contact the Moot Secretary at the email address above.

16. Written submissions should be emailed to the Moot Secretary as two electronic attachments, being one submission for the appellant and one for the respondent. Those attachments must be in **Microsoft Word format only**. Teams should please include a cover sheet on each submission that includes their anonymous identifier, the word count and whether the submission is for the appellant or respondent. The text on the cover sheet is for internal administrative purposes and does not count for the purposes of the word count.
17. The written submissions shall be adjudicated anonymously by a panel of judges, selected by the OC from the legal professions and academia.
18. The Panel will award marks for each submission as follows: (i) a mark out of 40 for legal analysis; (ii) a mark out of 20 for clarity of argument and persuasiveness; (iii) a mark out of 30 for research and use of authority; and (iv) a mark out of 10 for style. This will result in a mark out of 100 for each submission. These marks will be forwarded to the OC by the Panel. The OC will be responsible for deciding which teams will be invited to the Oral Proceedings.
19. The team with the highest combined score for both submissions (i.e., out of 200) will win the award for Best Written Submissions. In the event of a tie, the award will be made jointly.
20. As noted in §26, the written submissions will **not** be circulated to judges of the Oral Proceedings or to other teams. Each submission will be treated as confidential to the team that wrote it, and (unless permission is obtained) access limited to the OC and the Panel.

## Oral Proceedings

20. The Oral Proceedings will be conducted wholly in person. That is, teams need to be present in Oxford to compete at the Oral Proceedings. Exceptions to this rule will be granted only in exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the OC.

### Conduct of moots

21. This is an appeal. The facts of the case are admitted and agreed, and no new evidence or witness may be introduced.
22. There is no formal dress requirement, and no form of gown or court dress is required. However, mooters are advised to dress in a professional manner appropriate to a courtroom atmosphere.
23. Each mooter should address each judge individually as “Your Honour”. Collectively, the Bench should be addressed as “Your Honours”.
24. The order and timings for each speaker are as follows:

Speaker	Preliminary rounds, Quarter and Semi-Finals	Grand Final
Introductions: senior appellant and senior respondent	Not counted in allocation of time	
Submissions: 1. Senior appellant 2. Junior appellant 3. Senior respondent 4. Junior respondent	Between 16 and 20 minutes per speaker*	Between 20 and 24 minutes per speaker**
Rebuttal: senior or junior appellant	Between 2 and 4 minutes***	Between 2 and 5 minutes***
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>	<b>A maximum of 37 minutes per team</b>	<b>A maximum of 45 minutes per team</b>
Rules for the granting of extensions	*Judges may, at their discretion, grant an extension of up to two minutes for each speaker. If granted, an extension <u>does not count</u> for the allocation of time, above. **The Grand Final Panel may, at its discretion, grant an extension of up to one minute for each speaker. If granted, an extension <u>does not count</u> for the allocation of time, above. ***No extension of time is permissible for the rebuttal.	

(a) Prior to the start of each moot, each team must indicate to the clerk their timings for each speaker and, for the appellant, the time reserved for rebuttal. Once timings have been confirmed, they may not be altered.

(b) Each team shall have a maximum of 37 minutes to speak, except in the Grand Final, when they shall have up to 45 minutes. Timings must fall within the ranges in the table, above, and must be whole numbers.

*Note to §24(b): to illustrate, the appellant might reserve 16 minutes for senior counsel, 18 minutes for junior counsel and 3 minutes for rebuttal (total: 37 minutes). The respondent might reserve 18 minutes for each of senior and junior counsel (total: 36 minutes).*

(c) At the commencement of each moot, the senior appellant and senior respondent will each be asked to introduce themselves and their junior counsel, and to indicate the timings reserved for the team. It is not necessary that a particular form of words be used. The introductions will not form part of the time allocation of time for each team.

*Note to §24(c): the senior appellant might say, “May it please the court, my name is Ms X, and I appear as senior counsel for the appellant along with my junior counsel, Mr Y. I will speak for 17 minutes; Mr Y will also speak for 17 minutes; and we reserve 3 minutes for rebuttal.”*

(d) Time will be kept by the clerk, who will warn each mooter when they have five and then two minutes remaining, and when the mooter’s time has expired. Mooters must not continue speaking after the expiry of time without first gaining the permission of the Bench.

(e) The Bench will have discretion to grant an extension, although the maximum extension that may be granted for any given speaker is (1) two minutes from the expiry of time (for all moots other than the Grand Final) and (2) one minute (for the Grand Final), with the exception of the rebuttal, for which no extension may be granted. Teams should not assume that they will be granted extensions and should structure their submissions accordingly.

(f) If a mooter finishes their submission prior to the expiry of time, that time may not be ‘banked’ (i.e., added to the time allocated to another mooter).

25. During each moot:

(a) For the preliminary rounds and the quarter finals, only those team members who are speaking may sit at the bar table. For teams with a third team member, that person may sit in the gallery.



For the semi-finals and Grand Final, if (1) both teams comprise three mooters and (2) both teams agree, the third team member of each team may sit at the Bar Table with the advocates. That person may not speak during the moot and must follow all the rules for permissible conduct at the bar table.

(b) There is to be no communication by the mooters with anyone other than their fellow team member(s) at the bar table, the Bench, and the clerk. All communications between team members at the bar table must take place discreetly via handwritten notes. They may not communicate with one another using technical means. When their team is not presenting, mooters must conduct themselves in a way that does not distract their opponents or the Bench.

(c) Mooters may use a watch or smartphone when they are speaking to help keep time. They may not otherwise use any electronic equipment during the moot.

(d) The prohibition on the use of electronic equipment does not extend to members of the gallery (including any third team member sitting there). However, use of electronic equipment must not: (i) be used to communicate with mooters; (ii) distract attention; or (iii) be used to record or stream moot proceedings. If a team makes improper use of electronic equipment (for instance, by using it during a moot to communicate between team members), the OC may at its absolute discretion impose a penalty on that team, which penalty may include disqualification.

26. The scope of the oral arguments is not limited by the written submissions, and the judges of the Oral Proceedings will not have copies of such documents. Instead, each team should prepare a short skeleton argument for each of their appellant and respondent submissions.

(a) Each skeleton argument should (1) set out the key propositions that the team intends to make when arguing that side, on all points in issue in the problem, and (2) cite the authorities on which it will definitely rely. Other points may be raised and authorities cited in response to questions from the Bench and arguments made by the opposing side.

(b) Each skeleton argument must not exceed two sides of A4 paper. Teams should identify themselves on the skeleton argument only by reference to the anonymous identifier used for the Written Submissions. This should be included prominently on the front of each skeleton argument, along with the side (appellant or respondent) to which that document relates.

(c) The skeleton arguments will be circulated to judges ahead of the preliminary rounds so that they can see the arguments to be run and authorities to be relied

upon by each side. In order to facilitate this, all teams must submit eight copies of each skeleton (i.e., sixteen copies in total) when they register at the moot on Wednesday 25 March 2026.

(d) It is recommended that teams bring plenty of clean copies of their skeletons to the Oral Proceedings. At each moot, teams will exchange skeleton arguments with one another; these must be returned, unmarked and unaltered, at the conclusion of each moot. Additional hard copies of the skeleton arguments will also be required for teams that progress to the quarter finals and beyond. In those rounds, each Bench will comprise up to three judges. Teams should not assume that judges will return skeleton arguments, as these may have been annotated during the moot.

27. The remarks made by the appellant in its rebuttal are limited to the scope of the respondent's remarks. A good rebuttal will make specific points about the arguments pressed by the respondent, and not make new points or recapitulate the submissions already made by the appellant.
28. Ahead of the Oral Proceedings, teams will be provided with an electronic, paginated Bench Bundle containing the problem, the corrections and clarifications, and all the authorities cited in the moot problem. A physical copy of the Bench Bundle will be provided to judges at the Oral Proceedings.

Teams should produce two physical Supplementary Bundles for use by the Bench (i.e., one for the appellant and one for the respondent) comprising other authorities (statutes, cases, academic commentary, etc) on which they are likely to rely.

(a) Each Supplementary Bundle may comprise a maximum of 200 A4 sides. It is strongly recommended that pages be printed double-sided, such that the bundle is up to 100 A4 pages. For clarification, any cover page, tabs and/or table of contents are not included in the side/page count.

(b) In compiling their Supplementary Bundles, teams do not need to include every authority they might conceivably cite.

(c) In order to stay within the 200 side limit, teams are permitted to reproduce authorities in full or in part. Redacted or extracted authorities should include all aspects on which the team intends to rely, plus any necessary contextual material, including the court making the decision. Judges will not look favourably upon a single paragraph or page from a judgment, if this does not allow them to analyse how those statements are used by the team, nor how persuasive those arguments are.

(d) Teams should have regard to how easy it is for judges to physically handle their Supplementary Bundles. For instance, large, lever-arch folders can be more difficult to use than thinner folders or spiral binding. Teams should also consider ease of navigation through each bundle and have clear directions for judges to locate relevant passages. This can be assisted by such things as page numbering, tabs and flags. Highlighting of relevant portions of the authorities is encouraged. Teams are not expected to have their Supplementary Bundles professionally bound.

(e) Teams should identify themselves on their Supplementary Bundles only by reference to their anonymous identifier.

29. Each team must bring two copies of the relevant Supplementary Bundle to every preliminary round; and three bundles to every subsequent finals round. These will be collected by the clerk before the start of the moot for distribution to the judges. Teams will not exchange bundles.
30. Teams are wholly responsible for the production of all written materials for the Oral Proceedings. They should not expect that any printing or reprographic facilities will be made available to them by the OC, the Faculty of Law or Pembroke College.

### *Progress through competition*

31. There will be four preliminary rounds. These will take place on Thursday 26 March and Friday 27 March 2026. There will be two moots each day. Each team will complete once in each round, appearing twice for the appellant and twice for the respondent. The OC will be responsible for the draw to decide which teams face one another in the preliminary rounds. It is the responsibility of each team to ensure that they follow the competition schedule.
32. After the conclusion of each preliminary round moot, the judges will call a short adjournment, during which they will consider the performance of the mooters and decide on a winner. They will invite all mooters and audience to return, when they will (i) make some general remarks regarding the performance of the mooters and (ii) indicate the winner of the moot. Team and individual scores will not be announced. Nor will judges give feedback on the strength or content of the legal arguments presented.
33. In the preliminary rounds, each Bench will be asked to award the following scores (in addition to determining the winner of the moot):
  - (i) **A team score.** This will be a mark from 1 to 10, where:

9/10 = an excellent performance that displays the qualities of a semi-finalist or grand finalist;

7/8 = a very good performance that displays the qualities of a team that will progress to the quarter finals;

5/6 = a good performance that with improvement could be good enough for the team to progress to the quarter finals;

3/4 = a solid performance of a team in the preliminary rounds; and

1/2 = all other performances.

Across the four preliminary rounds, there is therefore a total of 40 points available per team.

In an extremely close moot, it is permissible for the Bench to give the same team score to both teams, however, it is not permissible for them to award a tie. It is permissible for the Bench to award half marks (e.g., 5.5 or 8.5).

(ii) **An individual score for each mooter.** This will be a mark out of 50, having regard to factors such as legal content, use of authority, courtroom manner, use of bundles, and responses to questions from the Bench. As an indication, an excellent mooter will score 40 and above, a very good mooter 35-39, a good mooter 30-34, and a solid mooter 29 and below. Only exceptional mooters will be awarded a mark greater than 45.

The aggregate of individual mooter scores for the winning team must be higher than for the losing team.

34. The teams will be ranked at the end of the preliminary rounds as follows:

(i) The team scores will be aggregated, and the teams ranked on the basis of those scores (from highest to lowest).

(ii) Where two teams have the same aggregate score, they will be separated according to win/loss record. If their win/loss record is also the same, they will be ranked on the basis of the aggregate of individual scores awarded to each mooter. If there is still a tie, they will be ranked according to their placing in the written phase of the competition.

35. All finals will take place on Saturday 28 March 2025. The quarter finals will be drawn as follows:

1st versus 8th

2nd versus 7th

3rd versus 6th

4th versus 5th

Progress from the quarter finals to the semi-finals will be by knockout. As such, the judges in the quarter finals will only be required to select the winner of the moot.

36. The semi-final will be comprised:

Winner of 1st v 8th versus Winner of 4th v 5th

Winner of 2nd v 7th versus Winner of 3rd v 6th

Progress from the semi-finals to the Grand Final will be by knockout. As such, the judges in the semi-finals will only be required to select the winner of the moot.

37. In determining sides in the quarter finals, semi-finals and the Grand Final, the following rules will apply:

(i) If the two teams met in the preliminary rounds, they will argue the opposite sides to that round.

(ii) If the two teams did not meet in the preliminary rounds, the winner of a coin toss will decide which side each team will argue. The highest ranked team from the preliminary rounds will call the toss. Unless otherwise advised, the winner of the coin toss will have two minutes to allocate sides.

The winner of the Oral Proceedings is the team that wins the Grand Final.

38. The decision of the judges is final. Any concerns regarding the conduct of the judges must be addressed discreetly to the OC, and must not under any circumstances be raised directly with the Bench.
39. Scores from all rounds will be held confidentially by the OC. At the OC's discretion, applications by a mooter to see their scores only, or a coach to see the scores of their team, may be considered after the conclusion of the moot.

## **Awards**

40. The following prizes will be awarded:

Winner, Oral Proceedings

Runner Up, Oral Proceedings

Winner, Best Written Submissions

*The 2nd-5th placegetters will also be announced*

Best Individual Mooter in the Preliminary Rounds (the Sir Nicholas Pumfrey Award)

*To be eligible, a mooter must have spoken in at least three moots in the preliminary rounds*

*Ranking will be undertaken by reference to the average score achieved by each eligible mooter in the preliminary rounds*

*Where a mooter participated in three moots, the average score will be calculated using those three moots; where a mooter participated in four moots, the average score will be calculated using the best three moots*

*The 2nd-5th placegetters will also be announced*

Highest Ranked Team After the Preliminary Rounds

Best Newcomers Award

*This award will be given to the highest-ranked team after the preliminary rounds representing an institution that: (1) has never participated at the Oral Proceedings; or (2) last participated at the Oral Proceedings in March 2021 or earlier.*

*If, under these rules, there are only three eligible teams or fewer, the OC may at its discretion expand the eligibility rules.*

Professor David Vaver Spirit of the Moot Award

*This award will be given to team that best embodies the spirit of mooting, having regard to such qualities as camaraderie, perseverance, respect of fellow competitors, passion, and academic excellence. The winner will be selected by reference to a vote of teams at the Oral Proceedings, along with feedback from judges.*

## **Discretion of the OC**

41. The OC may at any time amend or add to the rules of the Moot. In the event of a rule-change, notice will be given to all teams. Any questions of interpretation of the rules should be addressed, via the Moot Secretary, to the OC; during the Oral

Proceedings, these should be addressed to members of the OC directly. Decisions of the OC are final and are not subject to any form of appeal.

42. The OC may, at their discretion, disqualify a team if they consider that there has been a serious violation of these rules, or in the event of other behaviour that is considered contrary to the spirit of this mooting competition. A team so disqualified may, at the discretion of the OC, be charged the full fee described in §9, as if they had withdrawn from the competition.