

APPEALING AN ADJUDICATOR'S DECISION

Which decisions can be appealed?

The Preliminary Rounds

Where a team feels that an adjudicator's decision was manifestly wrong, it can lodge an official complaint with the QDU.

All complaints *must* be forwarded through the school's debating coordinator as the school's official liaison with the QDU.

The Finals

Please note that no adjudicatorial decision will be overturned in the Finals rounds of the competition. The Finals are adjudicated by a select group of the QDU's most highly skilled and experienced adjudicators. As such, their decisions will not be open to review.

The Review Process - Potential Outcomes

Under rule 12 of the competition, the Vice President (Adjudicators) may exercise her discretion to review an adjudicator's decision. This may result in:

- a) An upholding of the original decision *or*
- b) The decision being overturned *or*
- c) The awarding of a win to both teams in question.

The QDU is a volunteer organisation and can be required to deal with multiple complaints at any given time. Complaints often involve a significant investigation and body of correspondence. We aim to deal with complaints as quickly as possible but appreciate your patience during the investigation process.

When will the QDU overturn a decision?

The QDU is confident in the knowledge and ability of its adjudicators and accordingly, is disinclined to second-guess their judgment. Therefore, it will only intervene in circumstances where it can be shown that:

- a) The adjudicator's decision is based on a clear misapplication of debating rules and/or theory *or*
- b) There was bias on the part of the adjudicator in question.

What the QDU Won't Overturn

Adjudication is an art rather than a science and every decision will involve a subjective judgment as to which side's argumentation was more convincing.

Given the Adjudicators Vice President is not present at the debates in question, she will defer to the judgment of the adjudicator in relation to discretionary issues of persuasiveness. The QDU won't reassess decisions on the grounds that audience members thought arguments were more/less persuasive than the adjudicator on the night.

How do I appeal a decision?

Send a formal complaint to the Vice President (Adjudicators) at adjudicators.vp@qdu.org.au (see below as to contents of the complaint).

This must be done within one week of the debate in question.

What should I include in my Appeal?

- ❖ The basics:
 - Adjudicator's name
 - Name of the schools in the debate and the year level
 - Date and venue of the debate
 - The Topic
 - Your contact details

- ❖ A detailed explanation of the specific grounds on which you are challenging the validity of the decision.
 - All pertinent/relevant information and details in relation to your appeal should be contained within the complaint.
 - Make it clear on which ground you are appealing i.e. one of either a misapplication of debating theory or adjudicator bias.
 - Ensure that you make specific reference to what occurred in the debate to support your claim (i.e. try to avoid broad, unsupported statements to the effect that one side obviously displayed better matter, manner or method).