

## 2025 Mock Trial Magistrates' Guide

The following are tips designed to assist mock trial magistrates in judging mock trials:

- Familiarise yourself with the Mock Trial Manual and Competition rules.
- Magistrates are requested not to assign additional responsibilities to Mock Trial participants which are outside their roles and responsibilities as set out in the Mock Trial Manual.
- Follow closely the order of proceedings as set out in the Detailed Order of Proceedings, Summary Order of Proceedings – Criminal Matter, and Summary Order of Proceedings – Civil Matter.
- Mock trial participants are to rely solely on the mock trial script provided for each round – no extraneous legislation, case law, factual or evidentiary material is allowed to be used.
- The time limits for each component of a mock trial are to be strictly adhered to – mock trials must be completed within three hours.
- Familiarise yourself with the mock trial script prior to the mock trial, identifying the key legal or evidentiary issues and any objectionable parts of the evidence.
- Scoring should be conservative – scores of 5 and 6 are encouraged; scores of 7 or above should be reserved for performance at a higher than average level.
- Discourteous, disrespectful or aggressive conduct by mock trial participants must be penalised.
- It is not unusual for the school which succeeds in the legal case to be unsuccessful in the mock trial itself.
- Mock trials are designed to introduce the participants to the law and legal system, to be educational and not didactic, and to build confidence. Although the legal cases are based on actual legislation and case law, the mock trials are not meant to be conducted as if they were being heard in a real court. The only law and procedural rules to be applied appear in the competition Manual and the script for each round.
- Mock trial participants are aged between 15 and 17 and the mock trial competition is often their first introduction to the law and legal system. Positive feedback is encouraged and appreciated by the participants.
- Prior to delivering judgment on the legal case and announcing the scores in the mock trial, magistrates should invite teachers and coaches to raise any issues/concerns so that they can be addressed; once the judgment is delivered and the scores announced, it is too late.
- Although schools are encouraged to contact their assigned mock trial magistrate as soon as possible to organise a date and time for the mock trial, if a mock trial magistrate's schedule is particularly busy, it is suggested that the mock trial magistrate may wish to make contact first.
- It is recommended that mock trial magistrates arrange for the schools to email them a copy of the solicitors' notes and the names of the participating students and their roles prior to the commencement of the mock trial.