8TH RGNUL SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT LAW MEDIATION COMPETITION, 2026

RULEBOOK



CHAPTER I: PRELIMINARY

Article 1 – Definitions

(a) **"Assessment Criteria"** means the scoring and evaluation criteria set out for the Expert Assessors;

(b) **"Break"** means a period of 2 minutes that can be requested once by each Negotiation Team in a Mediation Session and during which the overall time of the Mediation Session continues to run;

(c) **"Caucus"** means a separate private session between the Mediators and one of the Negotiation teams. During the caucus, the overall time of the Mediation Session continues to run;

(d) **"Coach"** means a registered individual who may assist a Team in preparation for the Competition but shall not be permitted to be present during the Confidential Information Session or the Mediation Round;

(e) **"Competition Problem"** means any one or all of the five propositions framed by the Problem Committee, to be used in the Competition Sessions;

(f) **"Competition"** means the 8th RGNUL Sports and Entertainment Law Mediation Competition 2026;

(g) **"Confidential Information Session"** means the time period in which Negotiating Teams are provided access to the Confidential Information. During this time, the paired Mediators can discuss the strategy for the round inside a separate breakout room;

(h) **"Confidential Information"** means the background information of the Problem for the exclusive use of a Party and the Assessors, but not the Mediator and the other party;

(i) **"Expert Assessor"** means a person selected by the Organising Committee who evaluates and scores the performance of the Negotiating Team and the Mediator(s), during a mediation session as per the Assessment Criteria;

(j) **"Feedback"** means the critique or comments provided by the Expert Assessor to the participants after their performances in the Main Round, either individually or collectively;

(k) **"General Information"** means the factual information related to a Competition Session, which shall be accessible to all the Participating Teams and the assessors;

(l) **"Host Institution"** means the Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab;

(m) **"Institution"** means all other colleges and universities participating in the competition;

(n) **"Mediation Round"** means the stage of the Competition Session immediately following the end of the Confidential Information Session, during which the Teams are tasked to mediate on the Competition Problem;

(o) **"Mediator"** means a participant who has registered as a Mediator;

(p) **"Negotiating Pair"** means a team comprising two participants, a Client and a Counsel representing the same institution;

(q) **"Official Website"** means the official website of the Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution available at https://www.rgnulcadr.in/;

(r) **"Organizing Committee"** means the members of the Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution (CADR-RGNUL) and select members of other collaborating organisations;

(s) **"Participant"** means any person participating in this Competition in any role;

(t) **"Penalty"** means the subtraction of marks, disqualification of participants or any other disciplinary action taken by the Organizing Committee on account of violation of these Rules;

(u) **"Problem Committee"** means the designated team comprising selected members from the Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution (CADR), RGNUL, entrusted with the responsibility of formulating, drafting, and contributing to the Competition Problem(s);

(v) **"Room Coordinator"** means a member/s of the Host Institution designated as such, in charge of overseeing the smooth conduct of a particular round;

(w) **"Rule"** means an individual provision contained within this Rulebook, including any sub-rules or clauses thereunder. By registering for the Competition, all Participants shall be deemed to have read, understood, and accepted these Rules in their entirety and shall be bound by them;

(x) **"Team"** means a registered group of participants comprising one Client, one Counsel, and one Mediator, collectively representing a particular university and identified by a unique Team Code assigned by the Organising Committee.

Article 2 – Venue and Mode of the Competition

(1) The competition shall be conducted in a two-staged hybrid mode.

(2) The Preliminary Rounds shall be conducted virtually on Webex from 7-8 March 2026.

(3) The Advanced Rounds shall be conducted offline from 3-4 April 2026 at the Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law campus, located at Bhadson-Patiala Rd, Sidhuwal, Kishanpur urf Bakshiwala, Punjab.

Article 3 – Language

The official language of the Competition shall be English. The use of any other language is strictly prohibited during all Mediation Sessions.

Article 4 – Dress Code

The dress code for the 8th RGNUL Sports and Entertainment Law Mediation Competition, 2026, is Western Business Formals for all participants, regardless of gender.

CHAPTER II: COMPETITION FORMAT

Article 5 – Eligibility

(1) The Competition is open to all students currently enrolled in a 5-year integrated B.A. LL.B. or 3-year LL.B. course at any recognised University in India for the academic year 2025–2026. Students enrolled in LL.M. programmes are not eligible to participate.
(2) Each University may nominate up to one (1) team to participate in the competition. Universities interested in sending more than one team are requested to express their intention by reaching out to the organizing committee by writing an email at cadr@rgnul.ac.in. The allotment of second slot is subject to availability of total number of slots.
(3) By applying for registration, all Teams shall be deemed to have read, understood, and accepted the rules, terms, and conditions set forth in this Rulebook.

Article 6 – Participating Team

(1) Each participating Team must mandatorily consist of a Client, a Counsel and a Mediator, and a Team shall not be permitted to participate in any round if any one or more of its members are unable to participate for any reason.
(2) A participant registered as a Mediator shall not be permitted to switch roles and must remain the Mediator throughout the duration of the Competition.
(3) The roles as Client and Counsel which have been pre-assigned by the team as per the final registration form shall be carried forward in every round throughout the competition. The change of roles after the registration shall only be permitted on the Organising Committee's approval.
(4) In case of a violation of sub-rule (3), the penalties under Article 25 may apply on the discretion of the Organising Committee.

Article 7 – Room Composition

(1) Each Mediation Round shall comprise four Participating Teams, represented by a total of six Participants: two Negotiating Pairs (representing the Requesting and Responding Parties, respectively) and two Mediators, each from a different Participating Team.
(2) To avoid any conflict of interest, the Organising Committee shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that Mediators are not assigned to Competition Sessions involving a Negotiating Team

from their own Institution.

(3) A designated Room Coordinator may enter the room during the session to facilitate movement during Caucuses and address any logistical issues encountered by Participants or Assessors.

Article 8 – Competition Problems

(1) Each Competition Problem shall consist of two parts: (a) General Information, which shall be provided to all Participating Teams; and (b) Confidential Information, which shall be individually provided to the Requesting Party and Responding Party during the Confidential Information Session held prior to the commencement of the respective Mediation Round.

(2) A total of five (5) distinct Competition Problems shall be used during the Competition, assigned as follows:

(a) The Preliminary Round I;

(b) The Preliminary Round II;

(c) The Quarter-Final Round;

(d) The Semi-Final Round;

(e) The Final Round.

(3) All Competition Problems shall be based on themes related to Sports and Entertainment Law, including allied areas.

(4) The General Information for each Competition Problem shall be made available to all Participating Teams via the Official Website and through email communication.

(5) All Teams must strictly rely on the facts as stated in the Competition Problem. Neither the Negotiating Pairs nor the Mediators shall be permitted to introduce new facts or alter the existing facts. However, they may make reasonable inferences from the facts provided.

(6) Requests for clarification regarding the Competition Problems must be submitted via this Google Form within the deadline prescribed by the Organising Committee.

(7) The Problem Committee, in consultation with the Organising Committee, shall have sole and final authority to interpret any part of the Competition Problem, and its decisions shall be binding on all Participants.

Article 9 – Clarifications

(1) Each Team may submit a maximum of five (5) clarification requests per Competition Problem. Clarification requests shall be limited solely to the General Information of the Competition Problems.

(2) Clarification requests may only be made in cases of ambiguity or apparent error. Requests seeking additional facts or supplementary details shall not be entertained, as each Competition Problem is deemed to be self-contained.
(3) The Organising Committee shall publish all Clarifications on the Official Website and through email communication in accordance with the schedule notified to the Teams.

Article 10 – Confidential Information

(1) Prior to the commencement of each Mediation Round, the Negotiating Pairs shall be provided with the Confidential Information corresponding to the side they are representing in that round (i.e., Requesting or Responding Party).
(2) The Confidential Information shall be made available to the participants at the scheduled time as follows:
    (a) 25 minutes prior to the Preliminary Rounds;
    (b) 30 minutes prior to the Quarter-Final Rounds;
    (c) 30 minutes prior to the Semi-Final Rounds; and
    (d) 40 minutes prior to the Final Round.
(3) Each Negotiating Pair, along with its registered Coach (if any), may use its own private communication channels to discuss and prepare on the basis of the General Information.
(4) From the moment of commencement of the Confidential Information Session, the Negotiating Pair and the Coach are strictly prohibited from communicating with each other, the Mediator or any other person until the commencement of the Mediation Round.

Article 11 – Caucus

(1) A Caucus may be requested at any time during the Mediation Round by either a Negotiating Team or by the Mediators.
(2) All Competition Session Participants who are not part of the Caucus shall be required to temporarily exit the room for the duration of the Caucus. The prohibition on communication with the Coach shall continue to apply during this time.
(3) The Room Coordinator shall facilitate the movement of the relevant parties between the Competition Room and the Waiting Area, as required.
(4) Each Caucus shall be limited to a maximum of five (5) minutes. The Mediators shall be responsible for managing the Caucus and ensuring adherence to the time limit. In case the Caucus exceeds the designated duration, the extension will be subject to assessment based on its timing, necessity, and productivity.
(5) There shall be no restriction on the number of Caucuses that may be called during a round.

However, calling a Caucus is not mandatory and is left entirely to the discretion of the Negotiators and Mediators. Where a Caucus is called, it will be evaluated on the basis of its timing, justification, and overall contribution to the session.

Article 12 – Coach

(1) Each Participating Team may register up to one Coach upon informing the Organising Committee via email at cadr@rgnul.ac.in.

(2) The registered Coach may accompany the Team to the physical venue of the Competition and shall be permitted to observe that Team's rounds. However, the Host Institution shall not be responsible for providing accommodation and other facilities to the registered coach, and such costs shall be incurred by the Team.

(3) The Coach may be:

(a) A student or Professor from the Team's Institution; or

(b) A Qualified Lawyer; or

(c) An ADR Professional.

(4) Coaches registered with any Participating Team are strictly prohibited from communicating with any member of their team (Negotiating Pair or Mediator) during the Main Round. This prohibition extends to all phases of the Competition Session, including Breaks and Caucuses.

Article 13 – Timekeeping

(1) The responsibility of time management during the Mediation Round shall rest with the Negotiating Pairs and the Mediators.

(2) All Participants must strictly adhere to the time limits prescribed for each round of the Competition.

(3) Any extension of the allocated time for the Main Round, without prior approval or justification, may result in a penalty, at the discretion of the Organising Committee or the Expert Assessors.

CHAPTER III: COMPETITION STRUCTURE

Article 14 – Structure and Duration of the Rounds

(1) The Competition shall consist of two Preliminary Rounds, followed by the Advanced Rounds, i.e., the Quarter-Final, the Semi-Final, and the Final Round.

(2) The duration of each round shall be as follows:

(a) Preliminary Rounds – 60 minutes each;

(b) Quarter-Final Rounds – 60 minutes;

(c) Semi-Final Rounds – 75 minutes;

(d) Final Round – 90 minutes.

(3) Each Competition Session shall consist of the following stages:

(a) Mediation Round – 60, 75, or 90 minutes (depending on the round), inclusive of all caucuses, breaks, and discussions;

(b) Scoring and Feedback – 10 to 15 minutes, conducted by the Expert Assessors immediately after the conclusion of the Mediation Round.

Article 15 – Attendance

All Negotiating Pairs and Mediators are required to report to the designated competition venue at least 30 minutes prior to the commencement of each Competition Round for attendance and briefing on the expected conduct during the competition.

Article 16 – Preliminary Rounds

(1) All Negotiating Pairs and Mediators must participate in both Preliminary Rounds. Participation in both rounds is mandatory for progression in the Competition.

(2) Each session shall be evaluated and scored by two Expert Assessors appointed by the Host Institution. The Preliminary Rounds shall follow a progression system, and based on the cumulative scores and total votes received across both Preliminary Rounds, the top eight (8) Negotiating Pairs and top eight (8) Mediators shall advance to the Quarter-Final rounds.

Article 17 – Knock-out Rounds

(1) The Quarter-Final and Semi-Final Rounds shall follow a Knock-Out Format. The Negotiating Pair and Mediator with the higher score in each Mediation Room shall qualify for the next stage of the Competition.

(2) The roles of the Negotiating Pairs (i.e., Requesting Party and Responding Party), as well as the pairings for the Advanced Rounds, shall be determined by a random draw of lots conducted by the Organising Committee.

(3) The Host Institution reserves the discretion to make adjustments to the fixtures, including changes in room assignments or mediator allocations, to ensure that no Mediator is assigned to a Mediation Session involving their own Negotiating Team.

Article 18 – Final Round

(1) The winning Negotiating Pair and the winning Mediator from each Semi-Final Session shall advance to the Final Round of the Competition.
(2) The roles of the two Negotiating Teams in the Final Round, i.e., as Requesting Party or Responding Party, shall be determined by a draw of lots conducted by the Organising Committee.
(3) The Final Round shall be evaluated and scored by a panel of eminent Expert Assessors appointed by the Organising Committee.

Article 19 – Assessment

(1) Expert Assessors shall be selected and assigned by the Organising Committee to score the performance and provide feedback to the Participants to help them move through the Competition rounds and improve their mediation and negotiation skills.
(2) All assessors shall provide a Statement of Trust to the Organising Committee declaring their neutrality, impartiality and independence to assess the teams of the competition; and disclosing any conflict of interests with the participants, or the Host Institution, if it may cause a hindrance to the assessment of the round.
(3) The Organising Committee shall, as far as possible, make sure that in each Competition Session, Expert Assessors do not have a conflict of interest with the assigned Teams, including avoiding situations where the Expert Assessors and Teams belong to the same Institution.

Article 20 – Feedback

(1) Each Expert Assessor may provide constructive feedback to the competing Negotiating Pairs and the Mediator at the conclusion of the Competition Session, once the scoring is complete.
(2) If an Expert Assessor imposes a penalty on any competing Team, they may inform the concerned Team of the reason and explain the violation. The Assessor may refer to the specific Rule breached, but shall not disclose the number of points deducted.
(3) Under no circumstances shall an Expert Assessor reveal the final scores of any Team or the outcome of their individual assessment decisions.
(4) During the feedback session, Expert Assessors may refer to the confidential Information of either side of the relevant Competition Problem to clarify or contextualize their observations.

CHAPTER IV: SCORING & RESULTS

Article 21 – Scoring

(1) Throughout the Competition, the Negotiating Pairs and Mediators shall be evaluated and scored independently of each other. Qualification for subsequent Competition Sessions shall be determined separately for each role.

(2) The scoring criteria applicable to Negotiating Teams and Mediators shall be published on the Official Website of the Centre and through email communication no later than one week prior to the commencement of the Competition.

Article 22 – Ranking and Tie-Breaking Criteria

(1) The Negotiating Pairs and Mediators shall be ranked and selected for advancement to subsequent rounds on the basis of their overall scores and the total number of votes received across the Competition Sessions.

(2) In the event of a tie between two or more Negotiating Pairs in the Preliminary Rounds or Knock-Out Rounds, advancement to the next stage shall be determined by applying the following criteria in order of priority:

(a) the total number of votes received across all score sheets; and

(b) the highest cumulative score secured during the Joint Sessions.

(3) In the event of a tie between two or more Mediators in the Preliminary Rounds or Knock-Out Rounds, advancement to the next stage shall be determined by applying the following criteria in order of priority:

(a) the highest total score secured during Caucus Sessions, and

(b) the highest combined score in the Opening and Closing Statements.

Article 23 – Awards

(1) Certificates of participation shall be awarded to all individuals registered with the Organising Committee who are present for the Valedictory Ceremony.

(2) Certificates of Merit shall be awarded to the Winners and Runners-Up Teams, as well as the Best Mediator(s), in the same manner.

(3) A participant who is eligible for one prize under this competition shall not be eligible to be considered for any additional prizes.

(4) The teams advancing to the Advanced Rounds will not be eligible for the Best Team in the Preliminary Round Award.

(5) A detailed list of prizes and awards shall be announced via the Centre's official social media handles.
(6) Any Cash Prize, if applicable, shall be electronically transferred to the bank account specified by the respective awardee(s).

CHAPTER V: MISCELLANEOUS

Article 24 – Reference Materials, Gadgets, & Handouts

(1) During a Competition Session, Participants are permitted to use only personal notes and stationery items.
(2) The use of any electronic gadgets that enable communication is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, smartwatches, smart bands, or any similar devices.
(3) During the Mediation round, teams may present one handout only, limited to a single one-sided A4 sheet, typed or handwritten. The handout may contain any content, including text, pictures, diagrams, graphic representations, or drawings. Copies shall be provided to the other Competing Team, the Mediator, and the Judges at the time the handout is first produced. Teams may write on the handout during the course of the Mediation.
(4) For online rounds, this handout may be presented as a single slide or a single A4-sized digital sheet.
(5) No other objects, handouts, exhibits, or pre-prepared materials, including videos, computers, technological aids, or visual displays etc. may be used for general presentation or for presentation to the Mediator.

Article 25 – Violation of Rules

(1) Any violation of the Competition Rules may attract penalties, which may include the deduction of points or the disqualification of the entire Team, as determined by the Organizing Committee.
(2) Non-compliance with any instructions issued by the Organising Committee by any member of a participating team may result in penalties. The Expert Assessors evaluating the respective Mediation Round shall determine the penalty, if applicable.
(3) The Organising Committee reserves the right to impose penalties for any breach of the rules. However, before any penalty is finalised, the concerned Team shall be given a fair opportunity to show cause as to why the penalty should not be imposed.
(4) The decision of the Organising Committee shall be final and binding in all matters relating to rule violations and penalties.

Article 26 – Residuary Rules

(1) These Rules are subject to amendment, modification, or supplementation at the discretion of the Host Institution and the Organising Committee, to ensure the fair and efficient conduct of the Competition.

(2) The Host Institution, acting through the Rules Committee and the Organising Committee, shall have the exclusive authority to interpret, clarify, and resolve any ambiguity, inconsistency, or unforeseen situation arising under these Rules.

(3) The decision of the Organising Committee in all matters concerning the Competition shall be final and binding.

CONTACT DETAILS

All communications, queries, and requests for information regarding the Competition must be sent via email to cadr@rgnul.ac.in. Selected Teams are required to mention their Team Code in the subject line of the email for ease of reference.

For any other queries or assistance, participants may also reach out to the following Student Coordinators:

Ms. Aditi (aditi21165@rgnul.ac.in)
Ms. Vanshika Jain (vanshikajain21143@rgnul.ac.in)
Student Convenors, CADR-RGNUL