

UPICC MOOT OFFICIAL RULES



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RULE 1: General Moot Rules**Art.1 - Organisation**

- a. The UNIDROIT Principles for International Commercial Contracts International Arbitration Moot (hereinafter referred to as the “Moot” or the “UPICC Moot”) is an international law student moot competition organised by the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT). The UPICC Moot was formally announced by UNIDROIT on 11 November 2024 in Shanghai, China, as a new initiative dedicated to exploring the application and implications of the UPICC in commercial arbitration contexts.
- b. The first edition of UPICC moot in 2025 will be co-organised by the UNIDROIT Asian Transnational Law Centre (“ATLC”) and the Shanghai International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (Shanghai International Arbitration Center) (“SHIAC”). A Moot Organising Committee shall be constituted by the co-organisers and shall be the executing body for the first edition of UPICC Moot (hereinafter referred to as “the Organising Committee”).

Art.2 - Introduction and Object

- a. The UPICC was developed by UNIDROIT, an intergovernmental organisation established in 1926 with a mandate to examine ways of harmonising and coordinating the private law of States and of groups of States, and to prepare gradually for the adoption by the various States of uniform rules of private law.
- b. Since its initial adoption in 1994, the UPICC has become the world’s most important international soft law instrument in the field of international contract law. The UPICC Moot marks a significant step in promoting the use of the UPICC within Asia’s burgeoning commercial arbitration community. Through its collaborative and practical approach, the UPICC Moot seeks to foster the development of a new generation of legal professionals with deep expertise in the use of the UPICC to facilitate effective dispute resolution. The UPICC Moot achieves this objective by simulating arbitration proceedings applying the UPICC Principles to a hypothetical commercial arbitration case.
- c. The UPICC Moot provides three invaluable opportunities for participants:
 - 1) Educational Engagement: participants will learn the foundational principles of the UPICC and their practical application in arbitration scenarios.
 - 2) Skill Development: participants will develop their commercial arbitration and contract negotiation skills in a real-world international setting.
 - 3) Networking Opportunities: participants will have the opportunity to engage with and learn from seasoned arbitrators and legal experts in international commercial law from different jurisdictions and other participants.
- d. In addition, the UPICC Moot will provide finalists with the opportunity to travel to Rome, visit UNIDROIT’s headquarters and engage with the Institute’s Secretariat.

Art.3 - The Rules

- a. These Rules are the rules for the first edition of the UPICC Moot in 2025 (hereinafter referred to as “the Rules”). The Moot Rules might be subject to revision from year to year.
- b. The Organising Committee reserves the right to introduce modifications to the Rules at any time before the commencement of the International Oral Round, if deemed necessary. Any changes made will be communicated to the participating teams.
- c. The Organising Committee has the authority to interpret the provisions contained in the Rules.

RULE 2: Team Participation and Eligibility

Art.4 - Participation

- a. The number of participating teams is limited. The final list of participating teams will be determined based on specific selection criteria, taking the memorial scores, geographical representation, diversity, and other factors into account.
- b. A maximum of twenty (20) teams will be accepted to compete in the preliminary rounds. A maximum of four (4) teams will be accepted to compete in the semi-finals and final.
- c. Teams may either come from a university or from another higher educational institution that includes law as part of its program of study. Each university/institution may enter one team, regardless of the number of colleges, departments, faculties, or schools within that institution, and the team may include students from one or more of its colleges, departments, faculties, or schools. Universities/institutions are also permitted to register one team representing more than one university/institution.
- d. The Moot will be conducted in English.

Art.5 – Preliminary, Elimination and Final Rounds

- a. The preliminary and elimination rounds of the oral hearing for the 2025 Moot will be held at the premises of SHIAC in Shanghai, China, starting from 3rd November, 2025. The semi-finals and final rounds will be held in December 2025 or January 2026, at UNIDROIT headquarters in Rome, Italy.
- b. For the preliminary rounds, the teams will be separated into four (4) groups, and each team will have the chance to present twice, on behalf of both the Claimant and Respondent. The scores of each team's oral presentation will be totalled. The top two (2) teams in each group will advance to the elimination round, which will result in eight (8) teams in total competing in the elimination round. If there is a tie for 8th place, the decision as to which team will enter the elimination round will be determined by lot.
- c. In the elimination round, the teams will be seeded and paired so that the first and eighth, second and seventh, etc. will argue against one another. The teams with a higher ranking have the right to choose their own positions to act as either the Claimant or the Respondent.
- d. The four (4) top-ranked teams from the elimination round will be selected to participate in semi-final and final rounds at the UNIDROIT headquarters in Rome, Italy.

Art.6 - Team Composition

- a. Each Team will be comprised of a **maximum of five (5) team members.**
- b. The Organising Committee reserves the right to allow changes in a team's composition after the deadline in consideration of exceptional circumstances, or in the interest of fairness of the competition.

- c. The coach or a team member appointed by the team represents both the university/institution and the team before the Organising Committee (the “Contact Person”).
- d. Any changes to the details of the contact person must be communicated via email at upiccmoot@unidroit.org and moot@shiac.org.

Art.7 - Team Member Eligibility

- a. The Moot is addressed to law students specialising in international arbitration or contract law. Moot participation requires active enrolment in a bachelor's, master's, or JD degree program. Visiting exchange students may participate in the Moot as official representatives of their temporary academic institution.
- b. Non-law students may be considered eligible, provided that they have the requisite legal knowledge. It is each team’s own responsibility to ensure that its members have a level of legal knowledge suitable for the Moot.

RULE 3: Team Registration

Art.8 - Team Registration

- a. Registration will open on 10 April 2025. Teams interested in participating in the Moot are required to submit the registration information by 12 July 2025 (23:59 CEST).
- b. Receipt of registration will be acknowledged via email to the team Contact Person(s).
- c. The registration information should be sent to upiccmoot@unidroit.org and moot@shiac.org communicating the following information:
 - 1) Name of University/Institution and country;
 - 2) Full names of team members (no more than five (5));
 - 3) Full name of team coach or advisor (if any);
 - 4) Full name of the Contact Person;
 - 5) Email address of Contact Person for communications concerning the Moot;
 - 6) Secondary email address for the communications concerning the Moot, and
 - 7) Phone number of the Contact Person.

Art.9 - Registration Fee

No registration fee is required for the UPICC Moot.

Art.10 - Right to Refuse and Cancel

The Organising Committee reserves the right to refuse or cancel the registration of any team.

RULE 4: The Moot Problem

Art.11 - Case Basis

The 2025 Moot Case will centre on contractual disputes arising from an international sale of goods transaction governed by the UPICC.

Art.12 - Procedural Framework

The arbitration proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with the Shanghai International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (Shanghai International Arbitration Center) Arbitration Rules (SHIAC Rules 2024 Edition).

Art.13 - Document Distribution

Official case documents will be posted on the websites of UNIDROIT and ATLC on 23 April 2025.

Art.14 - Case Clarification

Substantive clarification enquiries regarding case materials must be filed via email by 30 April 2025 (23:59 CEST). The Organising Committee reserves its own discretion to disregard insubstantial inquiries. Binding clarifications will be issued to all participating teams by 13 June 2025 (23:59 CEST) through the official websites or email.

RULE 5: Memorial

Art.15 - Submission of Memorials

- a. All teams must submit their two (2) memorials for the Claimant and the Respondent by email to upiccmoot@unidroit.org and moot@shiac.org by 29 July 2025 (23:59 CEST).
- b. Memorials that are not submitted by this deadline will be subject to penalty points. A reduction of three (3) points for each 24-hour period, or part thereof, that exceeds the deadline, per memorial, will be imposed. Receipt of a memorial five (5) or more days after the deadline without prior authorisation from the Organising Committee will result in the disqualification of the team.
- c. Submission must occur in a single email message including the two (2) memorials.
- d. Memorials shall be attached to the email message as PDF documents and separate files titled "University/Institution name - Team-the Claimant" and "University/Institution name - Team-the Respondent".
- e. The name of the team and whether the memorial is for the Claimant or for the Respondent must appear prominently on the outside cover page so that it can easily be read without opening the file.

Art.16 - Memorial Format

- a. Each team must submit its memorials in size 12 Times New Roman font style. This requirement applies to all pages of the memorial, including the cover page.
- b. Memorials pages must be numbered continuously, with each page being numbered.
- c. The line spacing for all parts of the Memorial shall be 1.5 lines.
- d. A memorial may not contain tracked changes that have not been accepted or comments that have not been removed prior to submission.
- e. Violations of this article are sanctioned with one (1) penalty point per violation.

Art.17 - Word Limit

Each Memorial **must not exceed 20,000 words (including footnotes)**. Violations of this article are sanctioned with **five (5) penalty points per 400 words**. The 20,000 words count shall include the statement of facts, issues, summary of arguments, written arguments, submissions and (optional) annexes, and exclude the front cover, title page, table of contents, list of abbreviations, and index of authorities.

Art.18 - Order of Content

Each memorial shall include all the pages/sections below and shall be presented in the following order:

- 1) Front cover (including university/institution name; country; role as Claimant or Respondent; competition name; year; total word count);
- 2) Title page;
- 3) Table of contents;
- 4) List of abbreviations or glossary;
- 5) Index of authorities (list of sources);
- 6) Statement of facts;
- 7) Issues;
- 8) Summary of arguments;
- 9) Written arguments;
- 10) Submissions;
- 11) Optional: Annex (max two (2) pages); and
- 12) Back cover.

Violations of this article are sanctioned with two (2) penalty points per violation. The swapping of the order of two sections shall be sanctioned with one (1) penalty point.

Art.19 - Footnotes

- a. Footnotes must be in **Times New Roman, size 10 font. Footnotes of more than one line in length must be single spaced.**
- b. The spacing between each footnote shall be **single**.
- c. **Consistency** in the reference to sources throughout the memorial is required. **One referencing style only** may be used throughout the memorial.
- d. All the **sources included in the Index of Authorities must be included in at least one reference in the footnotes.**
- e. Full citation of a source must be used in the footnotes the first time a source is cited. After the first citation, abbreviations of sources within footnotes are allowed, provided they are consistent and announced in the Index of Authorities.
- f. Violations of this article are sanctioned with two (2) penalty points per violation. More than one violation of the same item of this Article will be considered as one violation in total.

Art.20 - Scoring Structure for the Memorials

- a. Scores are awarded out of a maximum of 100 points for the overall quality of the memorial.
- b. Points are allocated as follows:
 - 1) Knowledge and use of rules and principles of law: max 20 points.
 - 2) Proper and articulate analysis of the facts and law: max 18 points.
 - 3) Logic and reasoning: max 15 points.
 - 4) Extent and use of research: max 13 points.
 - 5) Clarity and organization: max 12 points.

- 6) Evidence of original thought and creative argumentation: max 10 points.
- 7) Persuasiveness: max 7 points.
- 8) Grammar and style: max 5 points.

Art.21 - Use of AI Tools

- a. Chat GPT/DeepSeek and other forms of generative AI are permitted merely **as an aid** in researching, writing, proofreading and editing team's submissions.
- b. If AI is used, teams should be particularly careful about confirming their citations to authority.
- c. The Organising Committee reserves the right to utilise available technological tools to ascertain whether AI has been used in the preparation of a team's submissions.
- d. The sole reliance on AI-generated memorials will be strictly prohibited and subject to penalty.
- e. The fabrication of citations, including AI-generated fraudulent references, is strictly prohibited. Participating teams are required to adhere to academic integrity standards and refrain from any form of scholarly misconduct and plagiarism.
- f. The teams that seriously violate this article will be disqualified from the competition at the Organising Committee's discretion.

RULE 6: Oral Round**Art.22 - General Procedures**

- a. Each team shall participate in **four (4)** Hearings during the Preliminary Round, representing each role (Claimant or Respondent) twice.
- b. Each Hearing shall take up to **one and a half (1.5) hours**, with each team being allotted a total of forty-five **(45) minutes** to present their arguments. The time allocated to the team includes questions from the bench and rebuttal and sur-rebuttal.
- c. Each team has a maximum of forty-five **(45) minutes** from the start of the scheduled time to appear before the Bench. The Bench has the discretion to grant additional minutes to the team if deemed necessary, provided that fairness is applied, and the opposing team is given approximately the same amount of additional time.
- d. Laptops and tablets maybe used by the oralist as support for their pleadings. The counsel and co-counsel may use laptops/tablets to take notes during the opposing party's pleadings.
- e. All electronic devices used must be disconnected from the internet.
- f. Communication between the counsel and co-counsel is strictly prohibited during the team's pleadings. The counsel and co-counsel may communicate in writing only.
- g. During the pleadings of the opposing party, no written communication or exhibits may be presented or delivered by any team member to any arbitrator.
- h. Communication with the audience/coaches/other team members is strictly prohibited.
- i. Counsels and co-counsels are prohibited from using any type of phone/mobile phone. A Bench Clerk will be tasked with timekeeping throughout the pleading.
- j. The audience may use their mobile phones/smartwatches or similar devices in a proper manner. The bench has discretion to prohibit any inappropriate use of such devices by the audience.
- k. Improper courtroom communication may result in the deduction of up to ten (10) penalty points.

Art.23 - Order of Appearance and Time Allocation

- a. Considering the principle of party autonomy, participating teams shall negotiate about the order of appearance before the hearing proceeding and submit the order to the bench. If teams cannot reach to an agreement of the order of appearance, the presiding arbitrator has the discretion to decide.
- b. The suggested order of the pleadings in each hearing is:
 - 1) Presentation by the first oralist of Claimant or Respondent (it shall be determined through negotiation between the two parties or by the presiding arbitrator which party will speak first): up to twenty (20) minutes.

- 2) Presentation by the first oralist of the opposing party: up to twenty (20) minutes.
 - 3) Rebuttal by the first oralist: up to two and a half (2.5) minutes.
 - 4) Rebuttal by the first oralist of the opposing party: up to two and a half (2.5) minutes.
 - 5) Presentation by the second oralist of the party who speaks first: up to twenty (20) minutes.
 - 6) Presentation by the second oralist of opposing party: up to twenty (20) minutes.
 - 7) Rebuttal by the second oralist: up to two and a half (2.5) minutes.
 - 8) Rebuttal by the second oralist of opposing party: up to two and a half (2.5) minutes.
 - 9) Brief feedback of the bench to the teams without entering into the substantive issues, the recommended feedback including suggestions for improving advocacy skills and advice on the competition techniques and performances of each oralist.
 - 10) Confidential deliberation and scoring of the bench.
- c. Questions posed by the arbitrators are included in the speaking time of the presentation and of the rebuttal, respectively.

Art.24 - Oralists

- a. Each team will have two **(2) individual oralists who can speak before the bench**. The rebuttal must be presented by the same oralist who delivered the presentation.
- b. Researchers/off-counsels are **not** allowed to speak before the bench at any stage of the Competition. However, researchers/off-counsels may sit beside the oralists at the same table.

Art.25 - Scope of Pleadings

- a. Teams are **NOT restricted to the arguments in their written memorial** as it is expected and encouraged that teams improve their arguments after the submission of the memorials.
- b. Oralists are not allowed to introduce new issues in their rebuttal or sur-rebuttal. All arguments and issues already raised by opposing counsels or questions asked by arbitrators during both presentation and rebuttal may be discussed during the rebuttal and sur-rebuttal.

Art.26 - The Bench

- a. Each Bench/arbitral tribunal will be composed of two (2) Arbitrators and one (1) Presiding Arbitrator and shall be assisted by a Bench Clerk. The presiding arbitrator will be appointed by the Organising Committee.
- b. Arbitrators are not permitted to express their individual opinion outside the courtroom and deliberation room regarding the quality of the presentations and results of the participating Teams. Furthermore, arbitrators are not allowed to give the participating teams any substantive feedback on details regarding the case.
- c. The individual score given to an oralist by an arbitrator is entirely within the discretion of that arbitrator. There is no requirement that the arbitral tribunal agree on scores. However, the arbitral tribunals may, and are strongly encouraged to, deliberate about

- the scoring at the end of a hearing and prior to submitting the scores to the Organising Committee.
- d. During the oral rounds, the Bench shall ensure respect for the Rules of Procedure and will assess the quality of the arguments. The arbitrators are encouraged to intervene with appropriate questions during the oral pleading to further assess the knowledge and the preparation of the oralists.
 - e. The arbitrators shall score the oral arguments in accordance with the scoring criteria provided for in these Rules.
 - f. Arbitrators should proactively disclose to the Organising Committee in advance any relationships they have with the participating teams, if any, to allow for decisions by the Organising Committee on potential conflicts of interest.
 - g. Objections of a team to the composition of the Bench due to alleged conflicts of interest or existence of a prior relationship must be disclosed and communicated to the Bench Clerk prior to the commencement of the hearing.

Art.27 - Role of the Bench Clerk

- a. The Bench Clerk is nominated by the Organising Committee.
- b. The Bench Clerk is responsible for:
 - 1) Timekeeping;
 - 2) The collection of the score sheets from arbitrators, if an arbitrator makes alterations on the score sheet, the Bench Clerk should remind the arbitrator to sign beside the alteration and deliver the scoresheets to the Organising Committee;
 - 3) Briefing and advising the Bench Members on the Rules of Procedure contained herein; advising the Bench on how to fill in the scoresheet;
 - 4) Keeping order during the hearing;
 - 5) Generally, facilitating the sessions' development.

Art.28 - Scoring

- a. Scores are awarded out of a maximum of 100 points for the overall performance of the team during each pleading. Each oralist is awarded a maximum of 50 points. Arbitrators are strongly recommended to score to **two decimal places** to prevent the occurrence of tied rankings.
- b. For each oralist, points are allocated as follows (total 50 points for each oralist, total 100 points for each team):
 - 1) Organisation, argument structure and time management: max 10 points.
 - 2) Knowledge and use of legal rules and principles of international law: max 10 points.
 - 3) Knowledge and use of the facts of the case: max 10 points.
 - 4) Questions and rebuttal: max 10 points.
 - 5) Persuasiveness, overall performance and style of presentation: max 10 points.

Art.29 - Penalties for Inappropriate Behaviour

Each team must uphold the highest standards of dignity and decorum, not merely within the courtroom but throughout the entirety of the Competition. Any inappropriate conduct or blatant non-compliance with the established procedures may lead to the deduction of up to fifteen (15) penalty points. In severe instances, the team may be disqualified from the Competition.

Art.30 - Scouting

Scouting is forbidden at all times during the Competition.

RULE 7: The Awards

Art.31 - Categories of Awards

- a. The winning team of the oral round in Rome of the Moot is the team that wins the final round.
- b. The awards given in the Moot are:
 - 1) Best Written Memorandum for Claimant.
 - 2) Best Written Memorandum for Respondent.
 - 3) Winning Team.
 - 4) First Runner-up.
 - 5) Second Runner-up.
 - 6) Best individual Oralist in Final round (1 Best Oralist).
 - 7) Best Individual Oralists in Preliminary Rounds (10 Best Oralists). For the preliminary rounds these awards will be won by the individual participants awarded the highest average scores during these rounds. To be eligible for this award a participant must have argued at least once for the Claimant and once for the Respondent.
 - 8) Award for the Spirit of UNIDROIT. This award will be determined by the Organising Committee upon suggestions from teams and arbitrators to recognise the team that best exemplifies the UPICC moot spirit of camaraderie, academic excellence, competitiveness, and appreciation of fellow competitors.
 - 9) Best Performance Award (3 teams). This award will be determined by the Organising Committee upon suggestions from teams and arbitrators.
 - 10) Other honourable mentions.

Art.32 - Award Certificates

Certificates will be prepared for all members of teams that win an award or honourable mention, as well as for those who receive an award or honourable mention for best individual oralist. A certificate of participation in the preliminary rounds and/or in the subsequent phase will be awarded to all participants.