

Hosting a competition

Hosting a regional round of a competition does involve a bit of extra work but it also saves you travel costs and is a chance to get more students involved and hence can boost a debating society by making so accessible the chance to watch and learn from some of the best speakers at a range of local schools. Make sure your school are happy with you hosting the round before you commit to it and that you have a teacher there to supervise. From our perspective, as a thank you, host schools will receive first choice over any additional teams that may become available for the first round of the competition.

The first thing you need to do in advance of the round is recruit some helpers to set up rooms, and meet teams etc. This is good role for younger students because they'll learn a lot from watching the debates! You can also use them as timekeepers if needed, just make sure they know what they have to do. Secondly organise some food, just some sandwiches and tea and coffee, your school canteen may well be able to help (just ask well ahead of time) or if not try and get everyone involved to help bring something, you should be able to cover costs from a debating society fund. Be clear on timings, it might sound like a little thing but on the day it'll make your life much easier! Know when you expect schools to arrive, when you want the first debate to start and when you expect to finished by (factor in clearing up time!) Advertise the debate in school to get an audience if possible and know which rooms will be available for your use because you need rooms for the debates but also rooms for teams to prepare in separately, somewhere for them to sit when they arrive and somewhere for the judges. Finally, a top tip is have an emergency contact number for your regional convenor, judges if possible and the schools coming in case anyone is really late and you don't know where they are.

On the day you need to set up the rooms for a debate, a main table for people in the debate, a table for judges and somewhere for the audience. Do make sure the rooms in which the debates themselves are taking place are booked solely for the competition, as disturbances can be very off-putting for those taking part! Equally, given that the room in which the debate is to take place is traditionally 'given' to the first proposition team during the 15 minutes preparation time, a quiet corridor or nearby space in which the other teams taking part in the competition can prepare is important

If possible provide some water and cups for judges and teams. Keep a phone on you in case anyone wants directions or is running late! Have some people in reception to meet teams and bring them to the room for them to wait in and offer them tea and coffee. Then when the judges arrive they'll tell you when they are ready for the first debate, do remember if you are competing yourself you'll need extra people around to sort out any problems while you prepare. Have the food set up for in the break in advance and other than that just enjoy yourself! And make sure you tidy up to avoid annoyed teachers in the morning...

By all means get in touch with the convenors, if you have any more questions - beyond that, good luck in this year's competition!