



**MIAMC**  
HYDERABAD

# 6<sup>TH</sup> GNLU ANNUAL LEGAL SERVICES FORUM 2025

## MEDIATION COMPETITION RULE-BOOK

15th & 16th  
February  
2025



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>About Gujarat National Law University .....</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>About the GNLU Legal Services Committee .....</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>About the Event.....</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>6<sup>th</sup> GNLU Annual Legal Services Forum – 2<sup>nd</sup> GNLU Mediation Competition, 2025 .....</b> | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Definitions.....</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Language and Eligibility .....</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Team Composition.....</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>General Rules of the Competition .....</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Code of Conduct.....</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Structure of the Competition .....</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>PRELIMINARY ROUNDS (ONLINE) .....</b>   | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>ADVANCE ROUNDS .....</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>A. Quarter Final Rounds (Online) .....</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>B. Semi Final Rounds (Offline).....</b>   | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>C. Final Rounds (Offline).....</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Clarifications .....</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Conflict of Interest .....</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Time Limits.....</b>  | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Time Keeping .....</b>  | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Release of Confidential Information .....</b>   | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Tentative Timeline .....</b>  | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Evaluation.....</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Awards and Prizes .....</b>   | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Internship Opportunity .....</b>  | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Contact.....</b>  | <b>14</b> |

## **ABOUT GUJARAT NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY**

Gujarat National Law University, Gandhinagar is a premier institution of legal education in India established under the Gujarat National Law University Act, 2003. With its exemplary faculty, staff, and committed students, the University endeavors to impart quality legal education, contextualizing it within the latest policy and practical developments in the fields of humanities, commerce, business administration, social work, science, and technology. GNLU is the largest National Law University in India with regard to student, faculty, and academic discourse strength and the only Indian National Law University to offer integrated law degrees in five streams including B.S.W. L.L.B, and LL.M., Ph.D. and diploma programs in a wide multitude of legal and interdisciplinary fields.

## **ABOUT THE GNLU LEGAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

The GNLU Legal Services Committee has been established as the epicenter of legal aid and all allied activities. The Legal Services Committee (LSC) is set up under Section 4(k) of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The committee rides on the principles of empowering society with legal awareness and legal aid. Over the years, the GNLU LSC has strived to recognize law as an instrument of social change. The Committee leads initiatives ranging from piloting research projects and running awareness drives, to pro bono litigation assistance and legal aid clinics.

## **ABOUT THE EVENT**

The GNLU Annual Legal Services Forum (GALSF) is the annual flagship event of the GNLU Legal Services Committee. The premise of the Annual Legal Forum is to connect and establish a foundation and a consortium of all Legal Aid Clinics and Legal Services Committees across the nation, address pertinent socio-legal issues, and facilitate discussion, cooperation, and contribution. We seek to give a platform to all exemplary voices, Law Universities, NGOs, and Legal Services Authorities throughout India in order to achieve the goal of providing affordable and accessible legal services to the underprivileged sections of society and bridging the gap that hinders the fulfilment of the aforementioned goal, by sharing their distinctive experiences.

The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the GALSF, scheduled to be held on **15-16 February, 2025**, will focus on the theme of *“Building Inclusive Societies: Quest for Quality Legal Aid”*. This year’s forum is dedicated to addressing pressing issues in society by combining three vital components, the **GNLU LSC Annual Grant Presentation, Mediation Competition & Round Table Conference**.

The GNLU LSC Annual Grant Presentation is a cornerstone of the event, embodying its commitment to informed advocacy and evidence-based action. This research component explores and delves into the theme of the rights and working conditions of gig workers, who are often exposed to exploitation and limited legal protection. The Mediation Competition is designed to give participants hands-on experience with resolving disputes, which aims to settle legal conflicts amicably through mutual agreement between the involved parties. In addition, the forum will hold the annual Round Table Conference wherein the faculty heads of legal aid clinics of all participating universities and other esteemed guests will enter into a formal discourse on strengthening the legal aid in the country and evolving a common consensus on a united effort of law schools towards quality legal aid.

## **6<sup>TH</sup> GNLU ANNUAL LEGAL SERVICES FORUM – 2<sup>ND</sup> GNLU MEDIATION COMPETITION, 2025**

The theme for the 2<sup>nd</sup> GNLU Mediation Competition is:

*“Protecting the Vulnerable through Alternative Dispute Mechanism”*

The primary objective of the mediation competition is to offer participants a hands-on opportunity to tackle legal disputes in the realms of everyday issues the common man faces. Participating in this competition will cultivate a nuanced comprehension of these complex legal domains and gain invaluable expertise in alternative dispute resolution techniques. Moreover, this practical experience will equip them with the confidence and efficacy needed to effectively address inquiries brought to legal aid centers. The Mediation Competition is focused on Family Disputes, Consumer Protection, Industrial Disputes, and Real Estate Disputes. Ultimately, this component serves as a dynamic educational platform, fostering the development of well-rounded legal professionals capable of comprehending intricate legal matters and proficiently navigating and resolving disputes to enhance access to justice for those in need.

## DEFINITIONS

- **“BATNA”** means "Best Alternative to a Mediation or Negotiation Agreement" and refers to what is the most feasible step for a party to take if the parties fail to reach an agreement.
- **“Competition Rules”** means the rules and guidelines mentioned herein.
- **“Confidential information”** means factual information given exclusively to one party in accordance with the rules of the competition.
- **“Conflict of Interest”** is a claim for recusal of one or more of the judges, only to be made in a scenario where a client-advocate/counsel-counsel pair or any of the two mediators face a judge or judges from the immediately preceding round, as it can negatively impact their scores due to possible bias culminated from the judge’s/judges’ impression of the participant in the last round.
- **“Eligible Student”** means a student enrolled in an undergraduate law degree programme at any of the universities recognized by the Bar Council of India. Each participant must be a current undergraduate student (5-year or 3-year course) at their respective institution.
- **“GALSF”** means the GNLU Annual Legal Services Forum which is the flagship event of the GNLU Legal Services Committee of the Gujarat National Law University.
- **“General Information”** is the factual information provided to the registered participants by the GALSF Mediation Competition that is delineated as such.
- **“Judge”** means a lawyer or an academician nominated and/or selected by the GNLU LSC who evaluates and scores the performance of the Participating Team during the competition in accordance with the Competition Rules.
- **“Mediator”** refers to a participant who has registered or is designated as a mediator.
- **“Organizing Committee”** refers to the GNLU LSC student body, Student Conveners, student volunteers and Faculty Coordinators and Advisors involved in organizing the 6<sup>th</sup> GALSF.
- **“Participating Team”** refers to a team from a recognised law university whose registration has been approved by the GNLU LSC for the GALSF.
- **“Requesting Party”** stands for the party, in the proposition, at whose behest the option of mediation or negotiation was exercised.
- **“Responding Party”** stands for the party other than the requesting party in the mediation or negotiation proceedings.

“WATNA” means the Worst Alternative to a Mediation or Negotiation Agreement and refers to the worst outcome if the mediation or negotiation fails.

## LANGUAGE AND ELIGIBILITY

- I. The competition will be solely conducted in the English language.
- II. All the law students currently pursuing a three-year LL.B. or five-year LL.B. course are eligible to participate in the competition.
- III. All the recognized universities are allowed to send only one team for the event. No cross-university team(s) are allowed.

## TEAM COMPOSITION

Each Participating Team shall consist of **3 members - 2 members shall act as a client and counsel pair and 1 member as a Mediator**. The role of the members shall not be changed once registered (i.e., for instance, the participant in the role of Mediator shall continue to play the role throughout the competition). Client and Counsel are not permitted to interchange their roles in ordinary circumstances. However, under exceptional circumstances, they may apply for the same. It is to be noted that the decision of the GNLU LSC shall be final and binding in this regard.

## GENERAL RULES OF THE COMPETITION

- I. Scouting is strictly prohibited. Violation of this rule shall result in disqualification after an immediate inquiry.
- II. Participants shall not attend any of the sessions of other teams or individuals during the competition, or receive information from any person who has attended any previous rounds.
- III. **Participants shall not reveal their identity or university to the panel of arbitrators/mediators or judges.** Participants shall address themselves as with the respective team codes allotted to them during the entire event.

*Note:* Disclosure of unwarranted information including the name of their respective colleges by the Participants is strictly prohibited. Any such disclosure invites immediate disqualification.

- IV. Team members are not allowed to switch their roles during the competition.

- V. If any team fails to be present in the competition room for the mediation oral rounds, for more than 10 minutes after the commencement of the session, they shall not be permitted to appear for that round.
- VI. Each member of the participation team shall be dressed in formals (western) for the duration of the competition.
- VII. The Organizing Committee shall serve as the final authority for the implementation and interpretation of these rules and of any supplementary rules or clarifications.
- VIII. If there is any situation that is not contemplated in these rules, the Organizing Committee's decision on the same shall be final and binding.
- IX. All forms of sexual harassment are prohibited, and any such reported instance will be thoroughly investigated and addressed in accordance with the GNLU LSC code of conduct.
- X. Participants are instructed to maintain mutual respect and decorum while contacting other participants, or any members of the Organizing Committee. Please refrain from using derogatory, disrespectful, or sexist language and remarks.
- XI. The Organizing Committee reserves the right to disqualify any team for misconduct during the competition. In case of doubts, the decision of the Student Convenors and the Faculty Coordinators of the board shall be final.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Participating Teams should **mention only their allotted team codes** for the purpose of communication with judges/organizers. The identity of the Participating Team or members or the name of their college/university shall not be disclosed to any other person during the course of the competition in any form other than to the organizing committee, whether directly or indirectly. In addition, sporting any visible or distinguishable badges/ card/ uniform by any participant which provides an opportunity to infer/disclose their identity or the identity of the law college/ university being represented, is strictly forbidden.

All the participants are to **adhere to the western formals/business formals style of dressing.**

## **STRUCTURE OF THE COMPETITION**

1. Preliminary Rounds I and II (**Online**)

2. Quarter Final Rounds (**Online**)
3. Semi-Final Rounds
4. Finals

## **PRELIMINARY ROUNDS (ONLINE)**

The Preliminary Rounds shall consist of Preliminary Round I ("Prelims-I") and Preliminary Round II ("Prelims II"). Each team shall mediate and negotiate in both rounds, once as a requesting party and once as a responding party. No team shall face the same bench or team more than once in the preliminary rounds. The Mediators may decide among themselves, before the Rounds, who shall be assigned "Mediator 1" or "Mediator 2".

**Scoring:** Each round shall be decided through the allocation of a total of six round points, with all points being awarded based on the scores of the client-counsel pair and also the mediator, in the case of mediation. A total of 3 points will be allocated for the preliminary rounds. Marks will be awarded as per the following criteria:

- If the difference between the cumulative scores is more than 10% of the higher score, the pair or mediator with the higher score will be awarded 3 points.
- If the difference is less than 10%, then the pair or mediator with the higher score will be awarded 2 points, and the other team will be awarded 1 point.
- In the case of a tie, the pair or mediator will be awarded 1.5 points each for that judge.

### **Example:**

*Situation 1:*

Pair A: 150 marks

Pair B: 130 marks

Difference: 20 marks

Since the difference is more than 10% of 150:

Pair A: 3 points

Pair B: 0 points

*Situation 2:*

Pair A: 120 marks



Pair B: 115 Marks

Difference: 5 marks

Since the difference is less than 10% of 120:

Pair A: 2 points

Pair B: 1 point

*Situation 3:*

Pair A: 110 marks

Pair B: 110 marks

Difference: 0

Since there is a tie:

Pair A: 1.5 points

Pair B: 1.5 points

All competing teams shall participate in the Preliminary Round I and II in online mode. The client advocate/counsel-counsel pairs shall advance separately, and the mediators shall advance separately. The teams will be ranked based on the points secured in the preliminary rounds I and II. In case of a tie, whoever has scored higher under **criteria 7** of the client-counsel (Scoring parameters sheet) and **criteria 8** of the mediator score sheet shall be considered to break the tie. If and only if the tie cannot be resolved using the previously mentioned procedure, the teams shall be given equal points.

## **ADVANCE ROUNDS**

The advance rounds shall proceed on a knockout basis, i.e., only 1 team from each round shall proceed to the next round.

The round structure may be changed at any point before the start of the competition at the discretion of the Organizing Committee. The changes, if any, shall be communicated to the participants as required, reasonably in advance.

### **A. Quarter Final Rounds (Online)**

The top 8 client-counsel pairs and top 8 mediators from the Preliminary Rounds shall participate in the Quarter Final Rounds. The top 8 client-counsel pairs shall be ranked based on the cumulative score of the Preliminary Rounds. The top 8 mediators shall be ranked on the basis of their cumulative scores obtained during the mediation session.

### **B. Semi Final Rounds (Offline)**

The winning client-counsel pairs and mediators from each one of the Quarter Final Rounds shall participate in the Semi-Final Rounds. The qualifying client-counsel pair shall be determined based on which team obtains the highest cumulative score in that round alone.

### **C. Final Rounds (Offline)**

The highest-scoring client-counsel pairs and the highest-scoring mediator in their respective Semi-Final Round shall participate in the final round.

## **CLARIFICATIONS**

Teams are required to submit their requests for clarification regarding the propositions via email at [galsf.legalservices@gnlu.ac.in](mailto:galsf.legalservices@gnlu.ac.in). There is no restriction on the number of clarifications that a team can request.

Any requests for clarification received after the specified deadlines will not be considered.

*Note:* Requests for clarifications shall mandatorily mention the allotted team codes. Clarification requests without team codes, or that otherwise include details that divulge the identity of the participants shall not be entertained.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Given the nature of the competition, there may arise situations wherein the participants or the mediators find themselves in a situation wherein they are judged by the same panel, or one of the members therein. The Organizing Committee will try its best to ensure that this situation is avoided. However, the participants are encouraged to report any such instance to the Organizing Committee.

Any such claim shall be made only during the first 5 minutes of the concerned round and shall hold no ground once the time has elapsed. The acceptance of any such claim is subject to the approval of GNLU LSC, the Student Conveners and the Faculty Coordinators only, and they retain absolute discretion to accept or reject such claim. No disputes whatsoever shall be entertained as against the decision of the Organizing Committee.

## **TIME LIMITS**

The time limits for each round are as follows:

- **Preliminary round I and II (Online):** 45 minutes for each round (excluding 5 minutes of Caucus/ Private session for each party) + 10 minutes post discussion and evaluation (Subject to the Judge's discretion).
- **Quarter Final rounds:** 60 minutes (excluding 5 minutes of Caucus/ Private session for each party) + 10 minutes post discussion and evaluation (Subject to the Judge's discretion).
- **Semi-Final rounds:** 60 minutes (excluding 7 minutes of Caucus/ Private session for each party) + 10 minutes post discussion and evaluation (Subject to the Judge's discretion).
- **Final rounds:** 90 minutes (excluding 10 minutes of Caucus/ Private session for each party) + post discussion and evaluation (Subject to the Judge's discretion).

Please note that the Organizing Committee reserves the right to make changes to the time limits before the release of the Confidential Information for each round.

## **TIME KEEPING**

The Organizing Committee member supervising the session shall be the official timekeeper. Teams have the responsibility to adhere to the time limit. Participants must note that they can speak only for the allotted time limit, as mentioned above. The Organizing Committee member shall notify teams about the remaining time during the round. Judges will be advised to not give any additional time and hence participants must adhere to the time split mentioned for the respective rounds.

## **RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

- Confidential Information (CI) for each Mediation round shall be released:

- 30 minutes before the mediation session for the Preliminary and Quarter Final Rounds.
- 45 minutes before the mediation session for the Semi-Final Round.
- 60 minutes before the mediation session for the Final Round.

Participants are strictly instructed to keep the contents of the Confidential Information for each round privy to themselves, and refrain from divulging any details therein to other teams or opposite parties. The participants shall be required to submit their mobile phones and electronic devices to the person who is in charge of the confidential information rooms and they can only be collected when the participants are leaving the confidential information rooms. Any violation of this rule shall result in immediate disqualification. In this regard, the discretion of the Organizing Committee shall be final.

### **TENTATIVE TIMELINE**

| <b>EVENTS</b>   | <b>IMPORTANT DATES</b>     |
|---|----------------------------|
| Commencement of Registration                                      | 15th December 2024         |
| Deadline for Registration   | 10th January 2025          |
| Release of Problem for Preliminary Rounds I and II                | 7th January 2025           |
| Deadline for Seeking Clarifications (Preliminary Rounds I and II) | 13th January 2025          |
| Release of Clarifications (Preliminary Rounds I and II)           | 15th January 2025          |
| Preliminary Round I and II (Online)                               | 18th and 19th January 2025 |
| Results (Preliminary Rounds)                                      | 21st January 2025          |
| Release of Problem for Quarter Final Rounds                       | 12th January 2025          |
| Deadline for Seeking Clarifications (Quarter Finals)              | 16th January 2025          |
| Release of Clarifications (Quarter Finals)                        | 17th January 2025          |

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Quarter Final Rounds (Online)                                     | 25th January 2025             |
| Results (Quarter Final Rounds)                                    | 27th January 2025             |
| Release of Problem for Semi-Final and Final Rounds                | 21st January 2025             |
| Deadline for Seeking Clarifications (Semi-Final and Final Rounds) | 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2025 |
| Release of Clarifications (Semi-Final and Final Rounds)           | 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2025 |
| Semi Final Rounds   | 15th February 2025            |
| Final Rounds  | 16th February 2025            |

*Note:* The release of sides (fixtures) for the specific online rounds shall be 24 hours prior to the commencement of the rounds. The fixtures for Semi-Final and Final Rounds shall be released 12 hours prior to the commencement of the rounds.

## **EVALUATION**

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR THE CLIENT-COUNSEL TEAM**

| <b>SL. NO.</b> | <b>CRITERIA</b>  | <b>MARKS</b> |
|----------------|--|--------------|
| 1.             | Opening Statement  | 10           |
| 2.             | Argument   | 10           |
| <b>3.</b>      | <b>Understanding of Problem (Issue Identification/ Prioritization of stakes)</b> | <b>20</b>    |
| 4.             | Teamwork and Cooperation   | 10           |
| 5.             | Professionalism and Advocacy   | 10           |
| <b>6.</b>      | <b>Strategy + Use of CI</b>  | <b>20</b>    |

|    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 7. | Time Management   | 10  |
| 8. | Post Consultation Session (Identification of BATNA and WATNA) | 10  |
|    | <b>Total</b>  | 100 |

### EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR MEDIATORS

| SL. NO.   | CRITERIA   | MARKS     |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 1.        | Opening and Closing Statement  | 10        |
| 2.        | Effective Negotiation Skills (Relationship Building and Problem Solving + other soft skills) | 10        |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Advocating Interests</b>  | <b>20</b> |
| 4.        | Mutually Generating Creative Opinions  | 10        |
| 5.        | Collaborating with the Other Party   | 10        |
| 6.        | Teamwork and Coordination  | 10        |
| 7.        | Effective use of Caucus  | 10        |
| <b>8.</b> | <b>Mediation Strategy</b>  | <b>20</b> |
|           | <b>Total</b>   | 100       |

### AWARDS AND PRIZES

- Each Participating Team shall be provided with a Certificate of Participation.
- The best performing team of the Preliminary Rounds I & II shall be given a Certificate of Appreciation and a memento.
- The Winner and Runner-Up client-counsel pair as well as the mediator shall be given respective certificates as well as the prizes and internship opportunities as mentioned below:

| <b>PRIZE</b>                  | <b>PRIZE MONEY</b> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Winner Client-Counsel Pair    | ₹ 20,000           |
| Runner-Up Client-Counsel Pair | ₹ 12,000           |
| Best Mediator                 | ₹ 10,000           |
| Runner-Up Mediator            | ₹ 6,000            |

## **INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY**

- 1. Winner Client-Counsel Pair & Mediator**
- 2. Runner-Up Client-Counsel Pair & Mediator**

## **CONTACT**

All correspondence with the organizing committee should be conducted through email, using the address- [galsf.legalservices@gnlu.ac.in](mailto:galsf.legalservices@gnlu.ac.in) and contact:

**Aaryan Dwivedi (Student Convenor) - +91 83404 51150**

**Varuni Tewary (Student Convenor) - +91 96079 04343**

**Mouli Gopesh (Legal Aid Head) - +91 90990 99268**