European Security and Defence College
European Union Military Secondary Schools Forum

EUMSSF
CSDP Olympiad

Regulation for the Residential Phase

EN

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction and General Framework 1
2. Purpose and Scope of the Regulation 3
3. Scoring & Structure of the Essay Competition 3
3.1 Overall Essay Competition 3
3.2 Syndicate Formation (First Round) 3
3.3 Final Round Selection 4
3.4 Qualification 4
4. Composition of the Evaluation Committees 6
4.1 Evaluation Committee for the First Round 6
4.2 Evaluation Committee for the Final Round 7
4.3 Standardized Scoring and Evaluation Procedure 7
5. Knowledge Competition 8
5.1 Team Knowledge Competition (warm up round) 8
5.2 Individual Knowledge Competition 9
5.3 Evaluation Forms 9

1. Introduction and General Framework

Historical Background: On initiative of Cyprus Security and Defence Academy and by decision of the European Union Military Secondary Schools Forum, the EUMSSF CSDP Olympiad Regulation was approved in 2026.

Organiser: The CSDP Olympiad takes place every two years. EU Member States holding the EU Presidency are encouraged to conduct the CSDP Olympiad according to the rules agreed within the EUMSSF.

Participation:

- Each EUMSSF Member and Associate Network Partner (ANP) may nominate up to two students. Only institutions that nominate at least one evaluator for the essay evaluations have the right to nominate students. More evaluators are welcome, and they may also participate in the residential phase of the CSDP Olympiad.
- Each institution may nominate one student for the cover page competition. This nominee can be one of the two existing competitors or an additional student. Only one cover page proposal is accepted per institution.
- In the event that a country which offers to take over the organization of the Olympiad has no EUMSSF member, a limited number of chosen secondary schools that arenot members of the EUMSSF may be proposed by the host to participate on an exceptional basis, subject to approval by the EUMSSF.
- The proposal must be submitted in a high-resolution format, both as a JPG and a PDF, to the ESDC Training Coordinator and the CSDP Olympiad's POC. The winning cover page will be chosen by a vote of the EUMSSF members during a regular meeting. The winner will be invited to attend the residential phase.
- All nominations must be submitted using the official nomination form by the deadline announced during the regular EUMSSF meetings. Late nominations will not be considered.

Pre-residential Phase

- For students, ear-marked to participate in the CSDP Olympiad, the first step is to pass and e-Learning phase, provided by the European Security and Defence College. The e-Learning must be finalised positively by a given date announced during the meetings. The e-Learning is mandatory also for the students that will take part on the Cover Page Competition.
- The Students must write an essay referring to a selected CSDP topic. These topics are to be agreed within the EUMSSF and are to be announced before the nomination phase. It is not allowed to adjust these topics or hand-in other topics.
- For the essay, the regulation on ”how to author & evaluate Essays” is to be applied correspondingly.
- The essays must be submitted in both Word and PDF formats to the ESDC Training Coordinator and the CSDP Olympiad Point of Contact (POC) by the deadline announced by the EUMSSF. Late submissions will not be considered under any circumstances.
- According to current regulations, each essay is graded by two evaluators. If the difference between their scores exceeds 15%, a third evaluator will grade the essay. The final score will then be calculated using the two closest scores.

Residential Phase

- The essays must be presented also during the residential phase of the CSDP Olympiad. The regulations for the ”Residential Phase” outline the presentation procedures, evaluation criteria, and scoring system.
- The knowledge competitions will take place during the second part of the residential phase. These regulations for the ”Residential Phase” outline how those competitions will be conducted.
- The winner of the Cover Page, participates in the knowledge competition of the residential Phase

2. Purpose and Scope of the Regulation

The purpose of this regulation is to ensure fair and equal preparation for the essay presentations and to provide clear guidelines for both the participating students and the evaluation committee (jury members).

By closely following these guidelines, students can maximize their potential scores during the presentation phase. Furthermore, this document outlines the scoring breakdown for each section of the presentation, as well as the calculation methods used to determine final scores for both the written essays and the oral presentations across the different phases of the competition.

3. Scoring & Structure of the Essay Competition

3.1 Overall Essay Competition

The overall essay competition consists of three equally weighted components, contributing to a total potential score of **300 points (100%)**. The student who accumulates the highest total score is the winner of this discipline.

Competition Component	Maximum Points	Weight
Written Essay Evaluation	100 points	1/3 (33.3%)
First Round: Syndicate Presentation	100 points	1/3 (33.3%)
Final Round: Championship Presentation	100 points	1/3 (33.3%)
Total Possible Score	**300 points**	**100%**

3.2 Syndicate Formation (First Round)

During the residential phase, all students will present their essays within assigned working groups, known as syndicates.

The total number of syndicates will be determined by the organisers based on final attendance, adhering to the following strict capacity rules:

- Each syndicate must contain **no fewer than 5 students** and **no more than 8 students**.
- All syndicates must be as close to equal in size as possible.

To ensure fairness, syndicates will be balanced dynamically based on the following criteria:

- a. National Diversity: Students from the same country should not be placed in the same syndicate.
- b. Academic Balance: Syndicates must feature a balanced mix of initial essay scores, ensuring that students with the highest and lowest written scores are evenly distributed.
- c. Demographic Diversity: A balanced representation of male and female students should be maintained across all groups.

3.3 Final Round Selection

The final round is designed to accommodate ten students. In consultation with the CSDP Olympiad organisers. The EUMSSF Chair and the ESDC Training Coordinator will determine the exact qualification framework based on the number of participating syndicates.

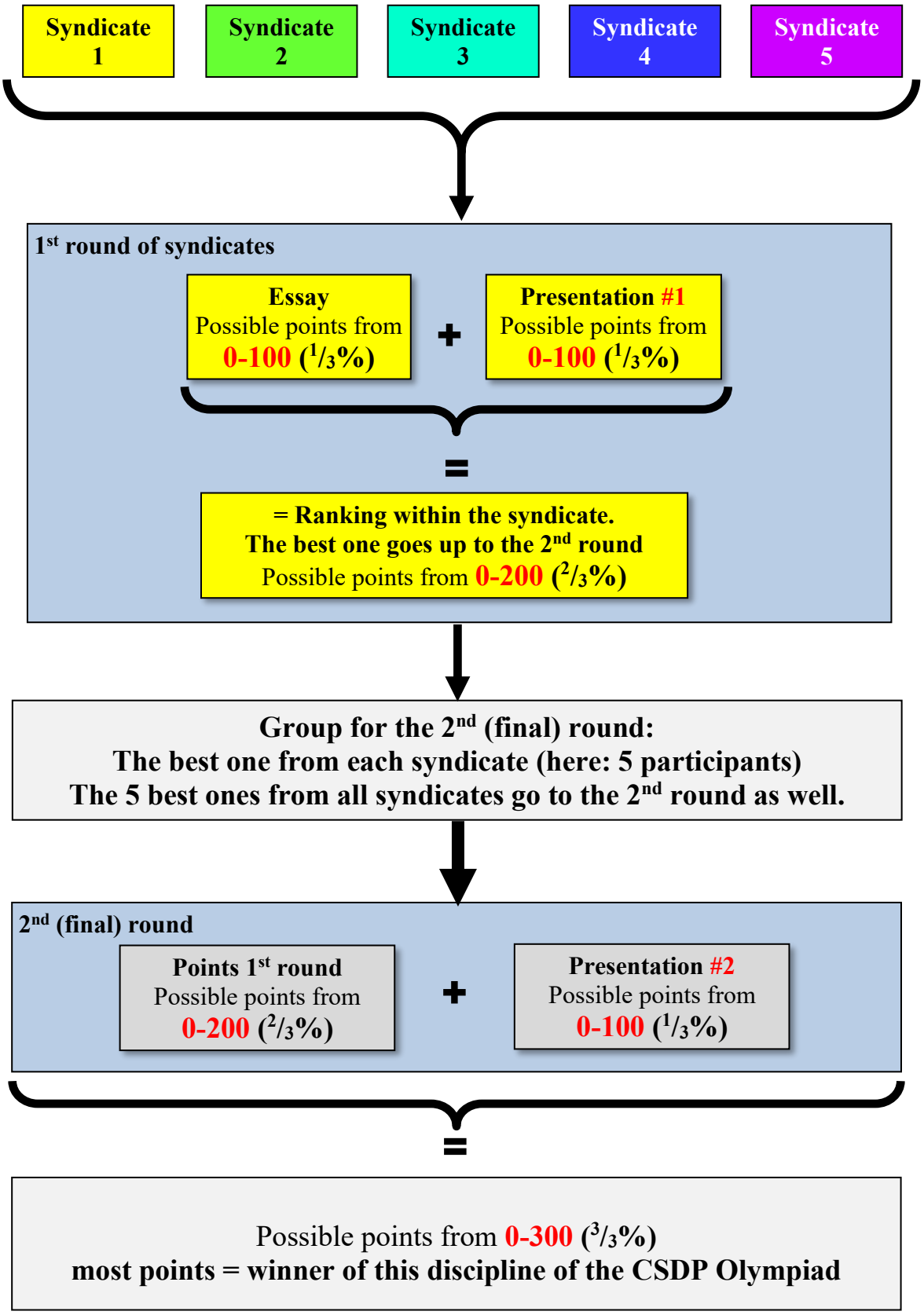
3.4 Qualification

The final round is designed to feature ten finalists. To ensure a fair competition regardless of the final number of syndicates formed, participants will advance based on the following framework:

Automatic Qualifiers: The top-ranked student from each individual syndicate automatically advances to the final round.

At-Large Wildcards: The remaining finalist slots (up to the target of 10) will be awarded to the next highest-scoring students across all syndicates combined, regardless of their rank within their specific syndicate.

(The scoring and progression framework is visually illustrated on the following page.)



Sketch 1: System for the rounds of presentations.[1]

1 Sketch created by the author.

4. Composition of the Evaluation Committees

4.1 Evaluation Committee for the First Round

Expertise: Committee members must possess proven expertise in public speaking and presentation evaluation. Committee members can be instructors, accompanying teachers, ESDC Staff, honorary guests ect.

Minimum Composition: A minimum of five committee members must be assigned to each syndicate. Larger committees are encouraged; however, the total number of members evaluating a syndicate must always be an odd number.

Conflict of Interest: The EUMSSF Chair, in coordination with the ESDC Training Coordinator and the CSDP Olympiad organisers, will ensure that committee members do not evaluate students from their own country.

Head of Committee: A "Head of Committee" must be designated for each syndicate. The CSDP Olympiad organizer will provide each Head of Committee with a secure list of their syndicate's participants and their corresponding written essay scores.

Presentation Order: The Head of Committee will organize a random draw (by lot) to determine the sequence of student presentations within the syndicate.

Audience and Spectators: Spectators are welcome to attend the presentations. However, participating students who have not yet presented are strictly barred from watching other presentations in their syndicate.

AI & Authenticity Verification: The Head of Committee must ensure that each candidate is asked two insight questions directly related to their essay topic. This defense is mandatory to verify that the student authored the essay independently and that the work was not generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI). This rule applies strictly to both the first and final rounds.

Scoring Compilation: At the conclusion of all presentations, the Head of Committee will securely transmit the calculated results to the Chair, who will announce the scores to all syndicates simultaneously.

4.2 Evaluation Committee for the Final Round

Composition and Leadership: The Final Round Committee must consist of high-level evaluators. Where possible, the Chair, the ESDC Training Manager, and the Chief Organizer of the CSDP Olympiad should serve on this panel, with the Chair designated as the Head of Committee.

Panel Size: A minimum of five committee members must be present. If a larger panel is used, the total number of voting members must be an odd number.

Presentation Order: The sequence of presentations for the final round will be determined by drawing lots.

Audience Protocol: All students who did not qualify for the final round are required to attend as spectators. General spectators may also attend. Finalists, however, are strictly prohibited from watching their competitors and must remain outside the presentation room until it is their turn to present.

Results Announcement: At the conclusion of all final round presentations and score calculations, the Head of Committee will officially announce the winners in front of all participants.

4.3 Standardized Scoring and Evaluation Procedure

Step 1 - Individual Evaluation:

Each committee member independently scores the presentation from **0 to 100 points** using the official evaluation sheet.

Step 2 - Trim Extreme Scores:

Before calculating the final score, the single highest score and the single lowest score given by the committee members are completely discarded.

Step 3 - Calculate the Average

The final score for the presentation is the mathematical average of the remaining committee members' scores.

5. Knowledge Competition

5.1 Team Knowledge Competition (warm up round)

Format: In this segment, the previously formed multinational syndicates compete against one another as teams to test their understanding of the Common Security and Defence Policy.

Purpose: The purpose of the Team Knowledge Competition is to serve as a warm-up round, familiarizing students with the question format they will encounter in the Individual Knowledge Competition.

Supervision: The competition is overseen and evaluated by a grand jury composed of the Chair, the ESDC Training Coordinator, members of the EUMSSF.

Syndicate Composition: The organisers will ensure all teams maintain absolute national diversity. Wherever possible, students from the same country will not be placed in the same syndicate.

Question Design: The jury will prepare a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions regarding CSDP concepts in advance of the residential phase.

Scoring System: The jury will establish a comprehensive scoring system that awards or subtracts points based on the speed of correct answers, delayed correct answers, incorrect answers, or skipped questions. This precise scoring breakdown will be explained to all competitors immediately before the event begins.

Determination of Winners: The syndicate with the highest cumulative score is declared the winner of the Team Knowledge Competition.

Tie-Breaker Rule: If there is a tie for first, second, or third place, a single, sudden-death "decisive question" will determine the final ranking.

Physical Activity Component: To introduce dynamic energy into the academic environment, this competition features a physical movement element (such as a sprint or obstacle relay to deliver the team's answer sheet to the jury). Each syndicate may strategically choose or switch their runner for each question. Consequently, all participants are required to bring appropriate athletic clothing and sports shoes. This component will only apply if agreed upon before the start of the competition.

5.2 Individual Knowledge Competition

Format: This elite round pits individual competition against each other in a final test of comprehensive knowledge.

Supervision and Questions: The competition uses the same grand jury structure, question types (multiple-choice/open), and penalty-based scoring system as the team round.

Scoring System: The jury will establish a comprehensive scoring system that awards or subtracts points based on the speed of correct answers, delayed correct answers, incorrect answers, or skipped questions. This precise scoring breakdown will be explained to all competitors immediately before the event begins.

Final Standings: The three individuals tracking the highest point scores will be awarded first, second, and third place in the Individual Knowledge Competition. A single decisive question will resolve any ties for the podium positions.

Platform: The organisers should prepare the knowledge competition on an online platform according to the guidance of the ESDC Training Manager and the Chair of EUMSSF.

5.3 Evaluation Forms

The official, standardized evaluation matrices for both the First Round Presentations and Final Round Presentations, are appended on the following pages.

Student's NAME, Forename	Country

Evaluator's (Committee Member's) NAME, Forename	Country

Syndicate number (just for the 1st round) ➔	

No.	Description	Achievable points	Points achieved
01	**Introduction:** The student professionally introduces themselves (Name, Country, and School/Institution).	**2**	
02	**Topic Framing:** The student clearly states the specific topic being presented.	**2**	
03	**Research Question:** The core problem and/or research question(s) are explicitly defined.	**4**	
04	**Methodology:** The methodology used to investigate and solve the problem is clearly explained.	**4**	
05	**Results:** The final findings and results of the essay are accurately described.	**8**	
06	**Critical Analysis:** The student delivers their own analytical opinion on the results, evaluating the topic critically from multiple perspectives.	**20**	
		Total: 40	
07	**Structure:** The entire presentation follows a logical, clear structure (e.g., Table of Contents → Main Body → Conclusion/Summary).	**6**	
08	**Visual Quality:** The presentation uses engaging, high-quality visuals (graphs, diagrams, charts, images) rather than simply reading text from a paper or slides.	**6**	
09	Academic Citation: Every slide containing external visual media (graphs, tables, sketches) attributes its source properly, either verbally or on slide. *For each missing source – 1 point less. (Penalty: subtract 1 point per missing citation. Minimum score for this section is 0).*	**4**	
10	**Elocution:** The student uses clear, distinct, and highly understandable language.	**4**	
11	**Persuasiveness:** The student successfully convinces the panel of the topic's relative importance (or non-importance) through robust, evidence-backed arguments.	**8**	
12	**Time Management:** The presentation strictly complies with the **10-minute time limit**. (Penalty: subtract 2 points for every full minute over or under the 10-minute mark).	**8**	
13	**AI Defence & Authenticity:** The student clearly and accurately answers the two insight questions posed after the presentation time block, proving independent authorship.	**24**	
		Total: 60	
14	**Total**	**100**	

Evaluator Signature: _____ **Date:** _____