



Harvard Undergraduate Economics Association

Coaches Manual

Harvard Pre-Collegiate Economics Challenge Handbook

April 4th, 2020

Overview

The Programming Committee of the Harvard Undergraduate Economics Association (HUEA) is responsible for organizing the Harvard Pre-Collegiate Economics Challenge (HPEC), which has historically occurred in the first half of April. This year, the competition will take place on Saturday, April 4th, 2020. The competition consists of a written exam round (with multiple choice individual exam), followed by quiz bowl rounds in round-robin and single elimination format.

HPEC has been growing in prestige and popularity, and HPEC 2014 marked the first time that schools outside of North America competed in the tournament. Although there have been variations over time, HPEC now has a \$125 base fee for each participating quiz bowl team. We continue to allow the first teams that register to decide whether they want a second or third quiz bowl team.

Travel

If you are traveling from out-of-state, we will provide high school students on-campus housing from Friday into Saturday in undergraduate dorms with college student hosts, ***based on availability***. Please indicate this on your team registration form. Don't forget to bring sleeping bags!

Exam Content and Rules

The competition consists of two components: a written exam to be administered in the morning, followed by quiz bowl rounds in the afternoon.

A majority of the materials tested in the competition will not exceed the AP Microeconomics/Macroeconomics level. No calculus will be used. Exam content may, however, draw on international economic concepts, historically significant economic ideas and ideas, and current economic events. Additionally, even though the AP curriculum does not use any equations to describe supply and demand, questions involving equations to describe supply and demand are valid.

Written Exam

The written exam consists of 60 multiple choice (A-D) questions to be completed in 90 minutes. No calculators are allowed. An individual's exam score will be the number of correct answers they provide plus the number of blank answers divided by four. No credit will be awarded for an incorrect answer.

If a student finishes early, they may turn in their exam but may not leave the competition room. If a student needs to go to the restroom, they must hand in their exam before leaving for the restroom.

When a student turns in their exam, they must turn in their whole exam including the exam questions, not just their answer sheet.

Quiz Bowl Rounds

The quiz bowl rounds will consist of rounds of a fixed number of questions each and will last no longer than 15 minutes per round. The round-robin quiz bowl rounds are 15 questions each whereas the elimination rounds are 18 questions each. Again, no calculators are allowed, but scrap paper may be provided.

A team may buzz in at any time, at which point the moderator will stop reading the question and wait for an answer. A team will have ten (10) seconds to provide an answer, with a two (2) second warning, and when either the ten (10) seconds have passed or the initial team to buzz in provides the wrong answer, the question will be re-read in full to the opposing team, who will then have ten (10) seconds to provide an answer with a two (2) second warning. If after ten (10) seconds the second team cannot provide an answer, then the question is passed and the correct answer shall be read out loud by the moderator.

If the question is read in its entirety and no team has buzzed in after five (5) seconds, the question will be passed and the correct answer shall be read out loud by the moderator. No explicit deferral of a question is allowed.

Ties are allowed for round robin quiz bowl rounds but not for elimination rounds. In the case of a tie at the end of an elimination round, a tiebreaker will be asked. Whichever team buzzes in and gives the correct answer first wins the round.

Recap of Official Rules

Competition Structure

1. Teams are divided into two “groups” and will alternate between taking the written exam and competing in Quiz Bowl Rounds.
2. Teams from the same school will be assigned to the same group to ensure question security.
3. Teams will be randomly assigned to a round-robin "division" for Quiz Bowl rounds; teams from the same school will not be sorted into the same division.
4. Each team should ideally face every other team in its Quiz Bowl division once during preliminary rounds (this is not guaranteed due to logistical constraints).
5. If there are an odd number of teams, the odd-team-out each round will be awarded a bye and 0.5 wins.
6. Advancement to single-elimination rounds will be determined by teams' weighted performances on both the written exam and preliminary Quiz Bowl rounds. The top 16 highest-scoring teams will advance. Ties will be broken in the following order:
 - o Quiz Bowl win/loss record
 - o Quiz Bowl point differential
 - o Total number of Quiz Bowl points scored

Curriculum Breakdown

Written exam (approximate percentages):

- 40% Microeconomics
- 40% Macroeconomics
- 20% Current Events

Quiz Bowl (approximate percentages):

- 25% Microeconomics
- 25% Macroeconomics
- 20% Economic History
- 15% Current Events
- 10% Potpourri
- 5% Modern Research Topics

Written Exam

1. The written exam will consist of 60 multiple-choice questions to be completed in 90 minutes.
2. Each correct answer is worth 1 point; each incorrect or blank answer is worth 0 points.
3. No calculators are allowed, but scrap paper will be provided.

Quiz Bowl

1. Each Quiz Bowl round will consist of 15 questions. Rounds will end after 15 minutes or after all 15 questions have been asked, whichever is earlier.
2. Teams may buzz in at any time, at which point the moderator will stop reading the question and wait for an answer.
3. After a team has buzzed in, that team will have 10 seconds to discuss and provide an answer.
4. Only the first answer is considered official. All subsequent answers shall be ignored.

5. If the first team to buzz in answers incorrectly, the question will be read in its entirety to the other team.
6. If the moderator has finished reading the question and no team has buzzed within 5 seconds, he or she will move on to the next question.
7. One point is awarded for each incorrect answer. No points are deducted for incorrect answers.
8. The team with the most points at the conclusion of the round wins. Ties are allowed for round robin quiz bowl rounds but not for elimination rounds.
9. If there is a tie at the end of an elimination round, sudden-death tiebreaker questions will be asked until one team has won.

Challenge Policy

1. Challenges can only be made by actively competing students, not coaches or audience members.
2. All protests on written exam questions must be made within 15 minutes of the conclusion of the exam directly to the competition organizers.
3. Quiz Bowl moderator judgment calls are not ordinarily not protestable. In case of blatant rules violations that may tip the outcome of a Quiz Bowl round (scoring inaccuracies, etc.), teams may appeal to the competition organizers immediately after the round has concluded.
4. For challenges to answers in Quiz Bowl rounds, a team member will raise a hand and verbally request a challenge from the moderator BEFORE the moderator has begun reading the next toss-up or bonus. If the moderator is unable to resolve the challenge, (s)he will consult the competition organizers.
5. The decision of the competition organizers is FINAL.

Awards/Recognition

- Top three overall highest-scoring students on the written exam
- Quiz Bowl overall team champion and runner-up

Competition Day

Logistics

There will be scrap paper available in large quantities for both the written exam and for each quiz bowl.

Morning Registration

At the registration table, in addition to accepting payments, each school's student roster will be confirmed.

Schedules

We will print an ample number of schedules to distribute on the day of the competition. We will also provide this electronically prior to the competition.

Round Robin Format

Round robin groups will consist of four teams each, with seed balancing based on the NCAA basketball seeding format.

For 32-team formats, round robin seeding and groups will be determined according to written exam score rank (in parentheses) as follows:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
A1 (1st)	B1 (2nd)	C1 (3rd)	D1 (4th)	E1 (5th)	F1 (6th)	G1 (7th)	H1 (8th)
A2 (16)	B2 (15)	C2 (14)	D2 (13)	E2 (12)	F2 (11)	G2 (10)	H2 (9)
A3 (17)	B3 (18)	C3 (19)	D3 (20)	E3 (21)	F3 (22)	G3 (23)	H3 (24)
A4 (32)	B4 (31)	C4 (30)	D4 (29)	E4 (28)	F4 (27)	G4 (26)	H4 (25)

Elimination Format

Following the round robin rounds, the seeds of each individual group (where A(2) denotes the second-ranked team in Group A after the round-robin rounds) will be determined and elimination brackets will be created as follows:

Pool 1.1.1: A(1)-B(2) — Pool 1.1.2: G(1)-H(2)

Pool 1.2.1: E(1)-F(2) — Pool 1.2.2: C(1)-D(2)

Pool 2.1.1: B(1)-A(2) — Pool 2.1.2: H(1)-G(2)

Pool 2.2.1: F(1)-E(2) — Pool 2.2.2: D(1)-C(2)

In this scheme, the first elimination round faceoffs will be pit the two teams in the same x.y.z pool against each other. The second elimination rounds will pit the remaining two teams in the same x.y pool against each other. After two elimination rounds, the winner of Pool x.1 plays the winner of Pool x.2 in the semifinals, and the winner of Pool 1 subsequently plays the winner of Pool 2 in the finals.

After Final Quiz Bowl Round

After the final quiz bowl round, trophies will be presented to the winning team and individual top scores will be announced. The top two individuals will receive trophies.

After the Competition

Deliverables

After the competition is over, we will send out the following three forms/pieces of information to all coaches:

- Individual students' scores
- Feedback form
- Correspondence information form so that we can e-mail you in the future

Thank you so much to the coaches for participating and for your support of economics.

Website Updates

The website will be updated with the results from the year's competition and a picture of the winners.

The HPEC page will be changed to indicate next year's competition date as soon as possible.