

DCHRA Capstone Mock Trial

Judge's Sheet

We thank you for finding time in your busy schedule to volunteer to make this valuable educational opportunity possible for our students! This sheet will guide you through the mock trial process.

Judge's Jobs:

1. Be aware of time. Each stage of the mock trial is allotted a specific amount of time. If the students are using only some time, you can reallocate that time to other roles that may need more time. Each side, the Complainant and Respondent, has been given five (5) minutes for each Opening Statement, five (5) minutes for each Direct Examination, four (4) minutes for each Cross-Examination, and six (6) minutes for each Closing Argument. **The first round of mock trials should begin by 10:30 a.m. The trials, including your verdict and feedback, should end at 12:00 p.m. The second round should start by 1:30 p.m. and end by 3:00 p.m.**
2. Take notes about the positive aspects of each student's performance. You can use the sheets included in this document for notes.
3. Rule on objections. ***Please allow each side to argue the objection before you rule on the objection.*** See the gray box below for more instructions.
4. Decide who will be the "**Best Attorney**" and "**Best Witness**" for each side.
5. Return your robe and this Judge Sheet to **Charisma, Sara, or Myriam (Street Law faculty)**.

Ruling on Objections

HOW DO I DECIDE? When deciding how to rule on an objection, go with your gut. If your gut says the question/testimony/evidence violates the basic rule of fairness, "sustain" the objection. If you think the question/testimony/evidence does not violate the basic rule of fairness, "overrule" the objection. **Students can ONLY USE the following objections: Leading Questions, Narration, Relevance, and Compound Questions. *No other objections should be recognized.*** A copy of the Simplified Rules of Evidence may be found on page 16 of your mock trial packet.

This sheet includes a script that you can use to move the trial along. **All of the Judge's speaking roles are *ITALICIZED*.** You can use this script or not. The decision is yours.

a. Mock Trial Procedures

Your courtrooms are prearranged. There are tables for both the Complainant and the Respondent, the judge's chair, and the witness chair. Please help everyone find their seats.

Evidence

The students are not required to formally introduce evidence and enter it into the record. For the purposes of these mock trials, all evidence – the stipulated facts, all witness statements, and all exhibits – is considered previously authenticated and, therefore, is fully admissible and not subject to objections.

After everyone is seated: **Please briefly introduce yourself, your personal and legal background, and your previous experiences with Street Law (if applicable).**

Judge says: *I want to welcome each of you to the DC Human Rights Act Capstone mock trial, sponsored by the Georgetown University Law Center's Street Law Program and the DC Human Rights Commission. I know you all have worked diligently in preparation for today. If you feel a little anxious, that's perfectly normal. Focus on doing your best and having fun. What is most important here today is that we all have fun and learn from these new experiences.*

This is the case of Students for Justice v. MCPS. This case is brought by students and staff of Metro City High School, the complainants, against Metro City Public Schools (MCPS), the Respondent, claiming that MCPS violated the DC Human Rights Act by discriminating against the complainants.

The Complainants bear the burden of proof in this case. Thus, in order to prevail in this case, the complainants must prove their case by a "preponderance of the evidence." This standard of proof requires the complainants to demonstrate that their claims were more likely than not to have occurred – or that it is 51% likely that the Respondent, Metro City Public Schools, did, in fact, discriminate against the complainants, in violation of the DC Human Rights Act.

*Would Counsel for the Complainant please introduce yourselves (allow each student to introduce themselves). **As each student introduces themselves, you can use this time to write their name next to their corresponding role(s) in the following pages.***

*Would Counsel for the Respondent please introduce yourselves (allow each student to introduce themselves). **As each student introduces themselves, you can use this time to write their name next to their corresponding role(s) in the following pages.***

Judge says: *Complainant, are you prepared to give your opening statement? (They respond affirmatively.) ***Judge says:*** Please proceed.*

Complainant's Opening Statement

(5 minutes max)

Student's Name: _____

Strengths & Comments:

Judge says: Respondent, are you prepared to give your opening statement? (They respond affirmatively.) **Judge says:** Please proceed.

Respondent's Opening Statement

(5 minutes max)

Student's Name: _____

Strengths & Comments:

Judge says: Complainant, you may call your first witness. Witness approaches the witness chair. You will swear them in. **Judge says:** Please raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Response: Yes. **Judge says:** You may be seated.

Direct Examination of Complainant Witness # 1
(5 minutes max including objections)

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Amari Brown Charlie Navarro Kai Jordan

Strengths & Comments:

Judge says: Respondent, do you wish to cross-examine this witness? They respond affirmatively. **Judge says:** You may proceed.

Cross-Examination of Complainant Witness #1
(4 minutes max including objections)

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Amari Brown Charlie Navarro Kai Jordan

Strengths & Comments:

Testimony of Complainant Witness #1

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Amari Brown

Charlie Navarro

Kai Jordan

Strengths & Comments:

(Continued on Next Page)

Judge says: Complainant, you may call your next witness. Witness approaches the witness chair. You will swear them in. **Judge says:** Please raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Response: Yes. **Judge says:** You may be seated.

Direct Examination of Complainant Witness # 2

(5 minutes max including objections)

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Amari Brown Charlie Navarro Kai Jordan

Strengths & Comments:

Judge says: Respondent, do you wish to cross-examine this witness? They respond affirmatively. **Judge says:** You may proceed.

Cross-Examination of Complainant Witness #2

(4 minutes max including objections)

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Amari Brown Charlie Navarro Kai Jordan

Strengths & Comments:

Testimony of Complainant Witness #2

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Amari Brown

Charlie Navarro

Kai Jordan

Strengths & Comments:

(Continued on Next Page)

Judge says: Complainant, you may call your next witness. Witness approaches the witness chair. You will swear them in. **Judge says:** Please raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Response: Yes. **Judge says:** You may be seated.

Direct Examination of Complainant Witness # 3

(5 minutes max including objections)

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Amari Brown Charlie Navarro Kai Jordan

Strengths & Comments:

Judge says: Respondent, do you wish to cross-examine this witness? They respond affirmatively. **Judge says:** You may proceed.

Cross-Examination of Complainant Witness #3

(4 minutes max including objections)

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Amari Brown Charlie Navarro Kai Jordan

Strengths & Comments:

Testimony of Complainant Witness #3

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Amari Brown Charlie Navarro Kai Jordan

Strengths & Comments:

Judge says: *Complainant, do you have any more witnesses to call? (Complainant says "No.") Complainant rests their case. (This means there are no more witnesses or evidence to be produced by their side).*

(Continued on Next Page)

Testimony of Respondent Witness #1

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Dana Alexander

Rain Rafiki

Parker Filani

Strengths & Comments:

(Continued on Next Page)

Judge says: Respondent, you may call your next witness. Witness approaches the witness chair. You will swear them in. **Judge says:** Please raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Response: Yes. **Judge says:** You may be seated.

Direct Examination of Respondent Witness # 2

(5 minutes max including objections)

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Dana Alexander Rain Rafiki Parker Filani

Strengths & Comments:

Judge says: Respondent, do you wish to cross examine this witness? They respond affirmatively. **Judge says:** You may proceed.

Cross-Examination of Respondent Witness #2

(4 minutes max including objections)

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Dana Alexander Rain Rafiki Parker Filani

Strengths & Comments:

Testimony of Respondent Witness #2

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Dana Alexander Rain Rafiki Parker Filani

Strengths & Comments:

(Continued on Next Page)

Testimony of Respondent Witness #3

Student's Name: _____

Circle Witness Name: Dana Alexander

Rain Rafiki

Parker Filani

Strengths & Comments:

Judge says: Respondent, do you have any more witnesses to call? (Respondent says “No.”)
Respondent rests their case. (This means there are no more witnesses or evidence to be produced by their side). **Judge says:** Complainant, would you like to provide a closing argument? (Complainant says yes). **Judge says:** You may proceed.

(Continued on Next Page)

Complainant Closing Argument

(6 minutes max)

Student's Name: _____

Strengths & Comments:

Judge says: Respondent, would you like to provide a closing argument? (Respondent says yes). **Judge says:** You may proceed.

Respondent Closing Argument

(6 minutes max)

Student's Name: _____

Strengths & Comments:

Judge says: Thank you to both sides for presenting your cases. For me to find Respondent, MCPS, liable for violating the DC Human Rights Act, Complainants must have proved that MCPS discriminated against the Complainants based on their personal appearance, religion, or political affiliation by a preponderance of the evidence.

Mock Trial Debrief

Encourage the participants to provide feedback on each other's performance as well. **Judge says:** *Did either side do something you thought was really good?* Remind the students that this is a time for constructive criticism. If they get too punitive, encourage them to give positive feedback as well.

*After the trial, but before you render your verdict, you should thank the students for their participation. You should then offer **POSITIVE FEEDBACK** to the students, explain your reasons for rulings on objections, discuss the effectiveness of their strategies, and comment on witness performances.*

The feedback ratio should be at least 3 positive comments for every 1 piece of constructive criticism.

(Continued on Next Page)

Verdict Form

Judge deliberates (**5 minutes max**) and decides the best lawyers and witnesses for each side. Feel free to leave the room to make your decision.

Verdict

Judge Says: My verdict is as follows:

1. As to the Complainant's claim of discrimination based on **personal appearance**, I find that the Respondent **DID | DID NOT (circle one)** violate the DC Human Rights Act.

2. As to the Complainant's claim of discrimination based on **religion**, I find that the Respondent **DID | DID NOT (circle one)** violate the DC Human Rights Act.

3. As to the Complainant's claim of discrimination based on **political affiliation**, I find that the Respondent **DID | DID NOT (circle one)** violate the DC Human Rights Act.

The Best Witness for the Complainant is: _____

The Best Attorney for the Complainant is: _____

The Best Witness for the Respondent is: _____

The Best Attorney for the Respondent is: _____

Judge Says: This court is adjourned.

**THE DCPS STUDENTS, THE DC HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, AND
GEORGETOWN STREET LAW WANT TO THANK YOU VERY MUCH
FOR DEDICATING YOUR TIME TO THIS
WORTHWHILE ENDEAVOR!!!**