

## ORGANIZING THE SCHOOL COMPETITION DURING COVID

Please note: This handbook was written specifically for live competitions. We share in everyone's hope that the situation with COVID is resolved soon and that we are all able to resume our normal lives. However, at present, the situation continues to vary from week to week and from state to state. We must in good conscience, and with an abundance of caution, recommend that all school and branches have their competitions remotely.

We are including this information as a service to our teachers. We have left the original (pre-COVID) information in this handbook as a reference should normalcy resume.

### Recommended Competition Formats

The majority of ESU Branches will be holding competitions in one of two formats: recorded and live via internet. These formats are described in detail on the following page.

### Selecting a Date

Many school competitions take place during the Fall/Winter semester. Dates vary depending on schedules and branch competition deadlines and dates. Branch competitions usually take place from January to early March (and must be held by March 22). School Competitions must be held at least **one week prior to the date of your local Branch Competition**.

When selecting a date, please be mindful of: school breaks, holidays (religious and national), State and standardized testing days (SAT, ACT), teacher/professional development days, competing education programs, other community events.

### Securing a Virtual Venue

We recommend you use Zoom if you choose to have a Live Via Internet competition, however, as a teacher you may have access to any number of potential venues.

Inviting an Audience: Depending on your Zoom account, you may have the capacity to invite up to 100 people to watch your competition or even more if you choose a higher priced Zoom membership. This will allow you to invite people to watch your Live via Internet competition.

Your school competition can be open to the public even now via viewing parties of the recorded competition or as described above for Live via Internet competitions.

Platforms: If your school chooses to have a recorded competition, students should upload their recorded performances to YouTube. The ESU will be using for its Zoom for Live via Internet competitions.

School Competition formats: We have highly recommended to our branches that they allow teachers to hold their competitions in whichever way they deem safest for their school community. Branches should expect to have competitors who have advanced from multiple types of school-wide competitions in their branch level competition.

Technical information and resources will be available on our website: Additional technical resources and links will be posted to our website soon.

ESU Shakespeare Competition Teacher's Tool Kit: Created by an ESU TLab Scholar and Globe program alumna, the ESU has provided additional support for our teachers in the form of a tool kit containing turn-key strategies and classroom exercises designed for remote and distanced learning. These tools are meant to help teachers more seamlessly integrate the competition into their remote, hybrid or live classes. Please find the tool kit under Documents and Forms on the Shakespeare section of our website.

## **Step by Step Directions for New Competition Formats During COVID:**

**Suggested Formats:** The ESU strongly recommends that teachers and schools hold their competitions in the safest way possible and choose one of the two following formats.

**Recorded Competition:** Same format as 2020 National Semi-Finals. This option is less reliant on technological expertise but does not allow for community involvement in the selection process. Lowest cost format.

1. Teachers sign up via School Participation Form, as usual.
2. Working with their teachers, participating students will record their performance and upload it to YouTube, providing the teacher with a link. Students should make these videos private or unlisted so that only someone with the link can view them. . This is a highly detailed instructional video that may be of help.  
<http://bit.ly/YouTubeUploadInfo>
3. Teachers will then share these links with a panel of judges who can deliberate individually or jointly via internet and select a winner. Just as in a live competition, judges must be provided their resources such as judges handbooks, and monologue and sonnet packets, only now this may be done by sharing a link via email. The teacher may also provide printed copies although this should not prove necessary. If they choose, teachers can set up a time/date for the judges to meet and select winner via Zoom meeting or conference call.
4. Once school competitions have concluded, teachers will upload a video of their school winner's performance to YouTube and provide a link on the school winner form
5. Branch coordinators will receive these forms. Once they have reached the deadline for school winner forms, they will email the links to their panel of judges.
6. Judges will adjudicate independently and then gather at the scheduled time to select a winner
7. Winner is announced via press release and email by branch and the Branch Winner Form is sent to National.

**Live via Internet:** Same format as the 2020 National Finals. This option requires purchase of a Zoom account (or similar platform), scheduled meeting (s), and an MC or host to keep the proceedings moving and cue the students. As it is live, there are more potential issues with failed technology in this option, such as power/cable outages, and access to technology. Schools should decide their own policy should a contestant's technology fail during a performance.

1. Teachers sign up via School Participation Form as usual. This link provides detailed information about Zoom:  
<http://bit.ly/ZoomBasicInfo>.
2. Teachers schedule a Zoom meeting as the competition venue and share the date school-wide. We recommend limiting access to the link in order to maintain security.
3. We also recommend holding a brief rehearsal to check for potential technology issues about one week before the competition. This will help avoid tech failures and the need to disqualify anyone for an incomplete performance and gives students a chance to buy or borrow more reliable technology.
4. Once the competing students have been identified, they and the judges are notified by the teacher of the Zoom link, date/ time, and performance order. We highly recommend requiring passwords and registration to avoid issues with people "crashing" the event.
5. At the competition, MC provides opening remarks and introductions, asks for applause to held until the end and silences all microphones except that of the next performer.
6. The first student performs as they would at a live competition. On completion their mic is silenced.
7. MC cues each student in turn, making sure that mics are on for performers and off for everyone else.
8. After the last performer, MC turns on all mics and asks for a round of applause. MC then escorts judges to breakout room on Zoom to deliberate. All others remain in main meeting.
9. MC and Judges return with the results. Winners are crowned. All mics silenced until end of announcement. MC asks for applause once more, closing remarks and ends meeting.
10. Working with teachers, winning student will record a video of their performance which will be submitted to the ESU for consideration by the branch. The rules and guidelines of these recording appear in the following pages.
11. Teacher submits the School Winner Form with a link to a recording of the student's performance.
12. Branches will inform teachers of the particulars of their branch competitions such as date, time and format.

As regards technology, we recommend that teachers should choose what is most comfortable and works best for them and their students. We recommend engaging all teachers, students, and community members with the necessary skills to assist with tech needs.

### **Rules for Recording and Submitting Performances**

We at the ESU recognize that our students and teachers are currently facing unprecedented challenges. It is never our intention to create an undue burden, or a situation that disadvantages one child over another. For that reason, the requirements for recording and submitting performances are designed to use basic, readily available technology accessible to almost anyone.

- You do NOT need professional recording, lighting, editing, or sound equipment. Cell phone video is acceptable.
- You must be clearly audible and clearly visible from head to toe.
- No costumes, no sets and no props of any kind. You are not allowed to use items of clothing (i.e. shoes, hair accessories, hats, gloves, etc.) as props. You may not use your hair as a prop ex. A character combing her hair should be mimed and the actor's actual hair left untouched.
- No camerawork (close ups, pans, fades), no effects (light or sound) and no mics.
- No titles or credits of any kind.
- You should introduce yourself by name (first and last) and the selections to be performed, in order.
- You may perform your selections in whatever order you prefer. All monologues and sonnets must be selected from the 2021 packets provided by the ESU. **No exceptions.**
- The video should be of one continuous performance with no edits or cuts.
- In a live competition the student would perform once at the branch level and once at the national semi-finals. For this reason, students who win their branch competition are not required to submit the same video to the national competition.
- Please upload your video to YouTube and enter the complete video address on the school winner form. **PLEASE MAKE YOUR VIDEO UNLISTED.**
- **Any deviation from the above may result in your disqualification.**