

The Qualifying an Expert Witness event places competitors in a courtroom setting. Participants will review a potential expert witness's resume and credentials, aiming to qualify them as an expert through questioning.

Entry Requirements

- Competitors in this event compete individually, not as a team.
- Chapters can only register 3 individuals to compete.

Materials

Competitors can/should provide the following materials. Competitors are only permitted to bring in the below materials to the competition. TPSA does not provide the below materials.

Competitor Provided Materials

- **Photo Identification:** Reference the rulebook (<https://tpsa.info/rulebook>) for details.
- **3" x 5" notecard:** Notes taken during prep (prior to competition). Both sides of the note card can be utilized, not to extend past card edge. Additional writing space cannot be added to card.

Supplemental Documents

- [2026 Regional Scenario](#)

Procedures and Timeline

- **Prior to Competition:** The regional case will be released at least one (1) month prior to the start of regional competition and the state case will be made available the day following the conclusion of the last regional conference.
 1. Review the criminal case prior to competition.
 2. Prepare predicate question.
 3. Make notes on a single, unaltered, 3" x 5" notecard. Both sides of the notecard can be utilized. This notecard is the only item that may be brought in to the competition
- **Check In (10 min Time Limit):** Competitors must check in to their event at their designated **check-in time** . Competitors that arrive **ten (10) minutes** after their designated check-in time will be marked as no-shows and not be allowed to compete out of respect for the time commitment made by our Judges and Volunteers.
- **Pre-Event Briefing (5 min Time Limit):** After check-in, Competitors will be guided to the designated event area. Once there, the Moderator will provide a comprehensive briefing, detailing the event's instructions, rules, and procedures. This briefing ensures that each Competitor is well-informed and prepared for the subsequent stages of the competition.
- **Presentation (10 min Time Limit):** Competitor will have ten (10) minutes to qualify their expert witness. The Moderator will start the timer when directed by the Judge.
- **Evaluation and Scoring (5 min Time Limit):** After the completion of the event, the judges will convene to assess each competitor's/team's performance based on a standardized rubric. This stage is conducted without the presence of the competitors. Judges will evaluate the criteria outlined in the rubric to ensure a fair and objective scoring process. Once all assessments are finalized, scores will be recorded for each competitor/team.

Professional Dress Guidelines

To secure professionalism points, competitors should dress in attire that accurately reflects what professionals in the respective public safety careers would wear while performing the tasks associated with the event. Competitors are also expected to consult and follow the professional dress guidelines in the rulebook to qualify for points. Additionally, participation is contingent upon meeting all prescribed safety protocols.

Judge Qualifications

- Prior access to the case for review so they know what the case is about.
- The judge in this event needs be an attorney/judge who has participated in qualifying an expert in court.

Criteria	Unattempted	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary	Points
Delivery						
Voice Pitch, tempo, inflection, quality	0 There is no variety in pitch, tempo, or voice inflection.	1 2 Little variety in pitch, tempo, voice inflection.	3 4 5 Could be heard most of the time. The competitors attempted to use some variety in vocal quality, but not always successfully. Quality seemed inconsistent at times.	6 7 8 Spoke loudly and clearly enough to be understood. The competitors varied voice inflection, (rate, pitch) volume to enhance the speech. Inflection complemented the verbal message. Pauses were attempted.	9 10 Voice was clear. The competitors varied rate & volume to enhance the speech. The voice heightened interest and complemented the verbal message. Appropriate pausing was employed.	
Diction pronunciation and grammar	0 Many distracting errors in pronunciation and/or articulation. Inconsistent with verbal message	1 2 Delivery quality minimal. Regular verbal fillers (ex: "ahs," "uh/ums," or "you-knows") present. Delivery problems cause disruption to message.	3 4 5 Delivery adequate. Enunciation and pronunciation suitable. Noticeable verbal fillers (ex: "ahs," "uh/ums," or "you knows") present. Delivery seemed inconsistent at times.	6 7 8 Delivery helps to enhance message. Clear enunciation and pronunciation. Minimal vocal fillers (ex: "ahs," "uh/ums," or "you knows"). Delivery complemented the verbal message	9 10 Delivery emphasizes and enhances message. Clear enunciation and pronunciation. No vocal fillers (ex: "ahs," "uh/ums," or "you-knows"). Delivery heightened interest and complemented the verbal message.	

Criteria	Unattempted	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary	Points
Stage Presence poise, posture, eye contact, and enthusiasm	0 No attempt was made to use body movement or gestures to enhance the message. No interest or enthusiasm for the topic came through in presentation.	1 2 Posture, body language, and facial expressions indicated a lack of enthusiasm for the topic. Movements were distracting.	3 4 5 Stiff or unnatural use of nonverbal behaviors. Body language reflects some discomfort interacting with audience. Limited use of gestures to reinforce verbal message. Facial expressions and body language are used to try to generate enthusiasm but seem somewhat forced.	6 7 8 Maintained adequate posture and non-distracting movement during the speech. Some gestures were used. Facial expressions and body language sometimes generated an interest and enthusiasm for the topic.	9 10 Movements & gestures were purposeful and enhanced the delivery of the speech and did not distract. Body language reflects comfort interacting with audience. Facial expressions and body language consistently generated a strong interest and enthusiasm for the topic.	
Professionalism						
Professional Dress Presents a neat, professional appearance in attire consistent with any recognized industry standard for the career and event tasks. Team members reasonably match in color and style.	0 Attire does not reasonably reflect a recognized industry standard for the career and tasks, or team members do not reasonably match.		3 Attire reflects a recognized industry standard, but noticeable issues with neatness or how clothing is worn detract from professional appearance.		5 Appearance is neat and professional. Attire reflects a recognized industry standard, is worn properly, and reasonably matches among team members.	
Professional Behavior Maintains a professional demeanor, stays attentive and engaged, and communicates appropriately for the role and situation throughout the event.	0 Professional demeanor and role-appropriate engagement are not demonstrated.	1 2 Shows limited professional demeanor. Communication or engagement remains too casual or disconnected from the role.	3 Generally presents professionally, but communication, attentiveness, or engagement is inconsistent.	4 Maintains a professional demeanor, stays engaged, and communicates appropriately for the role.	5 Sustains a professional demeanor and attentive engagement throughout. Communicates with tact and adapts appropriately to the people and situation.	
Content						

Criteria	Unattempted	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary	Points
Witness Comfort and Rapport Demonstrates an ability to establish rapport and make the expert witness feel comfortable during the qualification process.	0 Did not attempt to build rapport or make the witness feel comfortable.	1 2 Failed to build any form of connection, leading the witness to appear uneasy or reluctant.	3 4 5 Established a basic level of comfort, though there were moments of tension or hesitation.	6 7 8 Built a clear rapport with the witness, ensuring they were at ease and cooperative throughout the qualification.	9 10 Established an exceptional level of trust and comfort, with the witness appearing completely relaxed and forthcoming.	
Tenders Witness Efficiently tenders the witness to the court and request the court qualify the witness as an expert.	0 Did not attempt to tender the witness or their testimony as an expert to the court.	1 2 Ineffectively attempted to tender the witness or failed to state the purpose of the witness's testimony.	3 4 5 Attempted to tender the witness and stated the purpose, but lacked clarity or precision.	6 7 8 Clearly and efficiently attempted to tender the witness, outlining the reason for their testimony.	9 10 Masterfully introduced the witness, making an immediate and clear case for their relevance and purpose.	
Adherence to Legal Standards Follows legal standards and protocols when qualifying a witness, avoiding leading or inappropriate questions.	0 Did not adhere to recognized legal standards in qualifying the witness.	1 2 Displayed clear breaches of legal standards or asked inappropriate questions.	3 4 5 Mostly adhered to legal standards, but had minor lapses or potentially leading questions.	6 7 8 Consistently followed legal standards and maintained appropriate questioning throughout.	9 10 Exhibited exceptional adherence to legal standards, ensuring a smooth and indisputable qualification process.	
Qualifying Questions Asks a series of questions designed to establish the witness's expertise and relevance to the case.	0 Did not ask questions or the questions posed were entirely irrelevant to qualifying the witness.	1 2 Questions were irrelevant, unclear, or failed to establish the witness's expertise.	3 4 5 Questions established some aspects of the witness's expertise but may have missed key areas.	6 7 8 Effectively used questions to underscore the witness's expertise and relevance to the case.	9 10 Masterfully crafted questions that left no doubt about the witness's qualifications and relevance to the case.	
CV or Resume Presents the credentials, experience, and qualifications of the witness, highlighting their expertise and ask that the CV or resume be entered into evidence.	0 Did not make any effort to present the witness's qualifications or enter the document into evidence.	1 2 Failed to present or inaccurately represented the witness's qualifications or enter the document into evidence.	3 4 5 Outlined some of the witness's qualifications, but might have missed key details or lacked depth and did not enter the document into evidence.	6 7 8 Thoroughly presented the witness's credentials and experience, establishing their expertise but did not enter the document into evidence.	9 10 Expertly highlighted the depth and breadth of the witness's qualifications, leaving no doubt about their expertise and entered the document into evidence.	

Criteria	Unattempted	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary	Points
Case Relevance Ensures that the witness's expertise is relevant to the specific case at hand.	0 Did not try to relate the witness's expertise to the case.	1 2 Failed to connect the witness's expertise to the case's context or needs.	3 4 5 Made some connections between the witness's expertise and the case, but lacked thoroughness.	6 7 8 Highlighted clear and meaningful ties between the witness's expertise and the case's requirements.	9 10 Flawlessly connected the witness's expertise to the case, emphasizing the value and necessity of their testimony.	
Total Score: _____ / 100 pts						