

# Mooting Cheatsheet:

## Answering questions from the bench

During oral submissions, judges will ask you questions about your submissions. This is a great opportunity to use your answers to help judges better understand your submissions and clarify any confusion.

### Do's

1. **Take your time.** It is worthwhile to take your time and think your answer through before speaking. You can take up to 10 seconds to think about the judge's question and what you might want to say in response.
2. **Answer questions directly and concisely.** Many questions can be answered with a simple 'Yes' or 'No' and then explained further. When giving an answer with multiple components it is useful to signpost by stating that you have multiple responses and then going through them sequentially. For example, I have two reasons for that, First... Second... This will make it easier for judges to follow your answer.
3. **Use connecting phrases to return to your oral submissions.** It is important to be flexible and go to the issues the judge wishes to examine. However, try to move smoothly back to your own submissions, for example, by saying: 'And this brings me to my next submission that...'
4. **Ask for clarification.** If you find a judge's question is unclear or difficult to understand, ask for clarification or to rephrase the question.

### Don'ts

1. **Delay answering a judge's question.** Always answer a judge's question completely and immediately. Never tell a judge 'I'll get to that later' or 'I'll address that later in my submissions'.
2. **Evade or ignore a judge's question.** If you cannot answer a question, it is preferable to indicate politely that you are not able to answer the question. Some relevant phrases include: 'I am unable to assist the court' and 'That's the highest I can put it'.
3. **Interrupt the judge.** Always defer to the judges, and never interrupt them. However, you are free to disagree with propositions judges put to you. Always be polite in doing so.