

Dear Coaches,

As part of our continued commitment to providing a competitive, fair, and meaningful experience for students, NIETOC is launching a new Judge Training and Certification system for this year's tournament.

This system has been developed in partnership with Zebrapad, a platform designed specifically to support training and skill development in competitive speech. This collaboration allows us to provide a structured and accessible certification experience designed to support judges in applying NIETOC standards with clarity, consistency, and confidence.

All judges planning to adjudicate at NIETOC are required to complete the certification by April 24. Failing to do so will result in uncovered entry fees being charged to cover those judges who did not successfully complete the training. Please share this information and the two links below with every judge you are bringing to the tournament immediately so they may meet this obligation in the next two weeks.

What to Expect:

- \*The training and certification experience takes approximately 90 minutes to complete.
- \*It is self-paced and can be completed in multiple sittings.
- \*Judges may save their progress and return at any time.
- \*The experience includes both guided training and a practical assessment.

The goal of this system is not to evaluate personal preference or judging style, but to ensure that all judges are aligned with NIETOC expectations and prepared to make fair, well-reasoned decisions in the round.

This pilot represents an important step toward strengthening consistency across the tournament and supporting judges at all levels of experience. Access instructions and certification links are included below:

\*Training -- <https://www.zebrapadspeech.com/nietoc>

\*FAQ sheet –

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GVe2EPnD3P5ZOO\\_3xpMaU1T1q2Lfrxr4wjH2mSKuVu4/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GVe2EPnD3P5ZOO_3xpMaU1T1q2Lfrxr4wjH2mSKuVu4/edit?usp=sharing)

Thank you for your partnership and for the time and care you invest in supporting student competitors.

Sincerely, The NIETOC Executive Board