

Welcome to our Concern Debates Adjudicator Training 2026-2027

Concern Debates has been running since 1984: last year we celebrated our 40th anniversary

Over 20,000 debates organised

Over 88,000 students have taken part, speaking out and standing in solidarity with people both here in Ireland and overseas

Over 150 post primary schools participate each year from across the island of Ireland



Concern Debates Champions 2025-2026: Ursuline Secondary School, Thurles

CONCERN
worldwide

ENDING
EXTREME POVERTY
WHATEVER
IT TAKES

In today's information session:

1. Concern Debates Team
2. Structure of the Debates Programme
3. Marking a Debate
4. Feedback
5. Child Safeguarding
6. Debates Platform
7. Q&A – please add any questions to the chat!



Introduction: Meet the team



**OLGA
BRODESCU-KAVANAGH**

Looks after schools in Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare. She also takes care of our volunteers.

 **085 803 1801**

 **debates@concern.net**



MAEVE MOONEY

Looks after schools in Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny and Carlow.

 **085 254 0574**

 **debates@concern.net**



EOGHAN CONNOLLY

Looks after schools in Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Roscommon, Meath, Clare, Leitrim, Offaly, Laois, Westmeath, Longford, and Monaghan.

 **087 255 5177**

 **debates@concern.net**



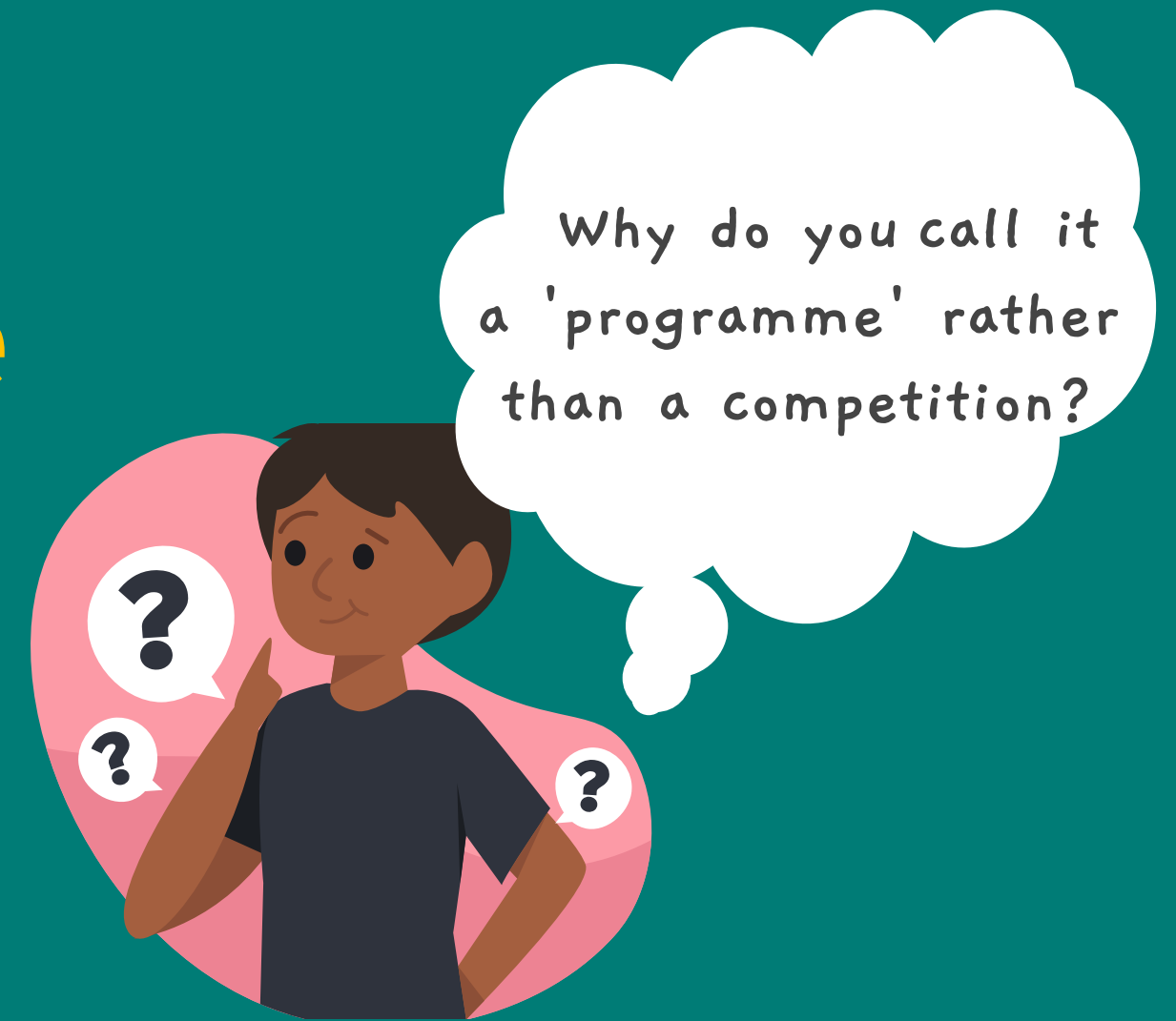
RYAN MCNALLY

Looks after schools in Donegal, Cavan, Louth, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Derry, Antrim, Armagh, Down and works on our NI Primary Debates programme.

 **debates@concern.net**

The Concern Debates Programme

Global Citizenship Education is a **lifelong learning process**, based on the values of solidarity, equality, inclusion and co-operation. What better way to get young people **researching, discussing and questioning** important global issues, than a good old debate!



Although it has a competitive element, the focus of Concern Debates is on the research, awareness-raising and educational experience. We want to emphasise this to all our participants!

Structure of the Debates Programme

League Phase

- 180 schools
- Three rounds
- September – December
- Online

Knockout Stage

- Three rounds
- January – March
- Round one: Top 64
- Round two: Top 32
- Round three: Top 16
- Online

Quarter Finals

- Top 8 schools
- 11th – 16th March
- In person
- Locations all around the country

Semi Finals

- Top 4 schools
- 8th April
- In person
- In Dublin

Final

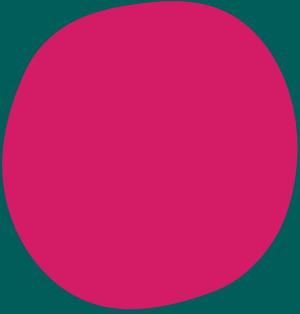
- Top 2 schools
- 7th May
- In person
- In The Helix, DCU, Dulin

Concern Debates Online

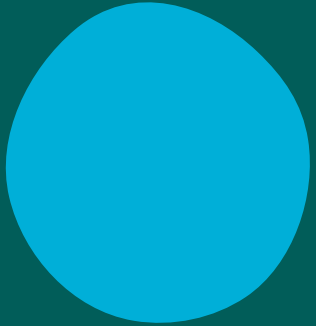
- Schools will record their live debates and upload them to the Debates Platform.
- The Concern Debates team will email volunteer adjudicators to check availability to judge a debate.
- When you agree to adjudicate a debate, we will email you to inform you that the recording is available to watch on the Debates Platform
- One adjudicator will mark each debate online in the timeframe of one week, fill in the marking sheet and feedback form for the debaters. (Adjudicators can also avail of the buddy system)
- Once we receive the feedback form and marking sheet with the verdict, we will share the results with the schools
- The electronic version of the marking sheets can be edited online or you can print the sheets to fill in manually



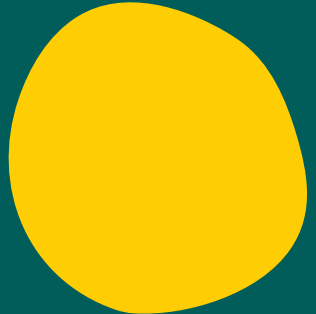
Debating Students Roles- Structure on the teams!



Captain - At the start of the debate they introduce the team, define the motion and then give their argument.



Speaker Two, Speaker Three and Speaker Four - Provide their points for the argument, and then offer rebuttals and refutation based on what the other team has said



Captain - At the end of the debate, they sum up the team's arguments and offer their own refutation and rebuttal. Captain of the Proposing team always closes the debate!



Chairperson & Timekeeper – Two additional student roles who help run the debate

Understanding the Marking Sheet

MARKING SHEET



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Motion: _____

Venue: _____ Date: _____

Proposing team: _____ Opposing team: _____

Speaker One	Speaker Two	Speaker Three	Speaker Four	TOTALS	A. Content	Speaker One	Speaker Two	Speaker Three	Speaker Four	TOTALS
10	10	10	10	40	Knowledge and Understanding of the subject	10	10	10	10	40
				0						0
5	5	5	5	20	Relevance to the motion	5	5	5	5	20
				0						0
5	5	5	5	20	Use and variety of sources	5	5	5	5	20
				0						0

Speaker Two	Speaker Three	Speaker Four	TOTALS	B. Debating Skills	Speaker Two	Speaker Three	Speaker Four	TOTALS
10	10	10	30	Refutation and Rebuttal	10	10	10	30
			0					0
10	10	10	40	Ability to persuade, communicate and engage	10	10	10	40
			0					0
5	5	5	20	Logical and well constructed argument	5	5	5	20
			0					0

Opening Speech	TOTALS	C. Captains' Duties	Opening Speech	TOTALS
10	10	Definition of the motion or response to definition	10	10
	0			0
5	5	Outline of team's arguments	5	5
	0			0

Closing Speech	TOTALS	C. Captains' Duties	Closing Speech	TOTALS
10	10	Summary and defense of team's arguments	10	10
	0			0
10	10	Rebuttal of other team's arguments	10	10
	0			0

D. Team Work	TOTALS	D. Team Work	TOTALS
10	10	Display of team work during the debate	10
	0		0
	0	Subtotal	0
	-	Less time penalties	-
	0	TOTAL	0

A. Content

Marks

Knowledge and understanding of the subject

10

Relevance to the motion

5

Use and variety of sources

5

B. Debating Skills

Marks

Refutation and Rebuttal

10

Ability to persuade, communicate and engage

10

Logical and well-constructed argument

5

C. Captain's Duties

Opening Speech

Marks

Definition of the motion or response to definition

10

Outline of team arguments

5

Closing Speech

Summary and defense of arguments

10

Refutation and rebuttal

10

D. Teamwork

Marks

Display of teamwork during the debate

10

Time Penalties

Deducted from total marks

The timekeeper will announce time penalties at the end of the debate

Don't worry about writing any of this down!

Marking sheet guide for Adjudicators and Teachers

What to look out for



A. Content 10 marks		Need for improvement (1-2/5) (1-4/10)	Good (3/5) (5-6/10)	Very Good Score (4/5) (7-8/10)	Excellent (5/5) (9-10/10)
	Knowledge and understanding of the subject 10 marks	Lacking to grasp the concept of the debate topic. Reading off speeches with no clear understanding.	Basic knowledge of the debate topic, without any depth.	Using language they can understand and explaining their arguments clearly.	The speaker knows what the debate is about. They understand the motion and have researched all aspects of the topic. They pre-empt the opponents' arguments. You are left in no doubt the speaker has a full understanding of the topic.
	Relevance to motion 5 marks	Sweeping statements made, with little or no relevance to the motion.	Referring to the topic but in very broad generalised terms, with some attempt to refer to the motion.	Staying on topic.	You are left in no doubt about the relevance of the point being made. The statement is clearly linked to the motion and always brought back to the motion in order to reinforce the point.
	Use and variety of sources 5 marks	Lack of facts and or sources for facts.	One fact that is backed up with a credible source.	Two facts backed up by a credible source.	Multiple facts backed up with clearly stated evidence relevant to point. Using facts from long established and 'trusted' organisations (United Nations, NGOs, Governments, media etc) will add strength to an argument.



Speaker One	Speaker Two	Speaker Three	Speaker Four	TOTALS	A. Content					Speaker One	Speaker Two	Speaker Three	Speaker Four	TOTALS
10	10	10	10	40	Knowledge and Understanding of the subject					10	10	10	10	40
5	5	5	5	20	Relevance to the motion					5	5	5	5	20
5	5	5	5	20	Use and variety of sources					5	5	5	5	20



Our Marking Sheet Guide will be sent to you when you agree to
mark a debate

Adjudicator Feedback & Results Form

ADJUDICATOR FEEDBACK AND RESULTS FORM

(PAGE 1 OF 2)

This form is to be filled out by the Adjudicator after the debate. This form should be kept confidential and returned to Concern along with the marking sheets.

Date:	Motion:	Venue:	Adjudicators:
Proposing Team:			
Opposing Team:			

SECTION A Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS. Feel free to note as much or little as you wish
Knowledge and Understanding of the subject, relevance to the motion, use and variety of sources

PROPOSITION	Positive Feedback:	
	Areas to work on:	
OPPOSITION	Positive Feedback:	
	Areas to work on:	

SECTION B Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS. Feel free to note as much or little as you wish
Refutation and Rebuttal, ability to persuade, communicate and engage, logical and well constructed argument

PROPOSITION	Positive Feedback:	
	Areas to work on:	
OPPOSITION	Positive Feedback:	
	Areas to work on:	

The sandwich approach; something positive, structured criticism, something positive!

Comment on how teams scored high i.e. 'Great use of sources when you quoted the Irish Times...'

Keep it brief and constructive – focus on areas in marking sheet!

i.e. 'Try to include 3 pieces of rebuttal in each speech', 'Remember to always provide a source when quoting statistics'

Common Mistakes

Do

- ✓ Find something positive to say about both teams – this might be a student's first debate!
- ✓ Fill out every section of the feedback sheet with as much detail as possible - schools do not receive the marking sheet, only the feedback sheet so please provide as much commentary as you can!
- ✓ Evaluate arguments with an open mind according to the marking sheet – you don't have to agree with the winning argument!
- ✓ Double check your marks before sending your results
- ✓ Let us know if you are no longer able to mark debate as soon as possible

Don't

- Do not mark higher for schools with higher video production - Stick to content and the marking sheet
- Do not allow personal preferences or unconscious biases to influence your marks. Characteristics such as accent, clothing, school uniform, or mannerisms must not affect a student's score
- Do not single out students in your feedback (by name or by speaker number) and keep comments general
- Do not put the marks on the feedback sheet (schools do not receive the raw scores)

Child Safeguarding: Checklist

Keeping participants safe is at the heart of our work.
We prioritise protecting the interests, needs and safety
of children.

- Do not take photos, screenshots or downloads when adjudicating.
- Never be alone with a student, e.g. talk to students in a group in a public space at in person debates, never offer lifts to children.
- Interact with children in a respectful and appropriate manner.
- Report any known or suspected cases of child abuse to Concern (safeguarding@concern.net)

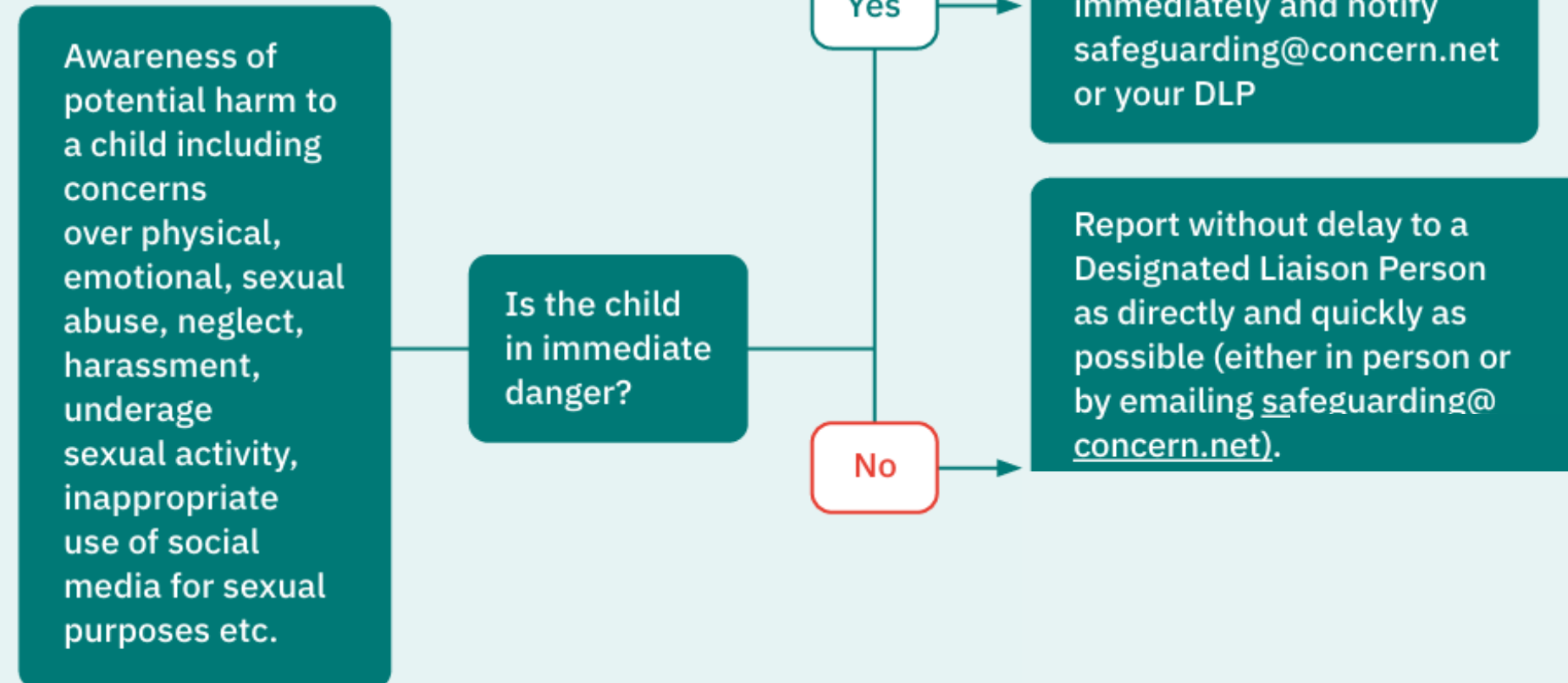
Debates Adjudicators are required to strictly adhere to
Concern's Child Safeguarding policy.

[Safeguarding | Concern Worldwide](#)



Child Safeguarding Reporting

Reporting Process



For Safeguarding concerns:

Email: safeguarding@concern.net

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

Georgina Eastaugh
georgina.eastaugh@concern.net
Schools Programme Manager
Level 0, Camden Street, Dublin

Niamh Cooney
niamh.cooney@concern.net
Safeguarding Adviser
Level 1, Camden Street, Dublin

For more information on recognising the signs of child abuse, please visit:

[Safeguarding | Concern Worldwide](#)

Some feedback from our debaters...

"(I learnt that) not everyone has the same opportunities that we do, so we should use what we have to the best of our abilities, and try make a positive impact on the world"

"Big changes cannot be made without small ones"

"We didn't realise just how big the challenges were in other countries. We were a bit ignorant before!"

"It made us think about the domino effect - one person can make a huge difference"

"We learnt how to differentiate between reliable and unreliable sources"

"Rebuttal and refutation is where our critical thinking came to life"

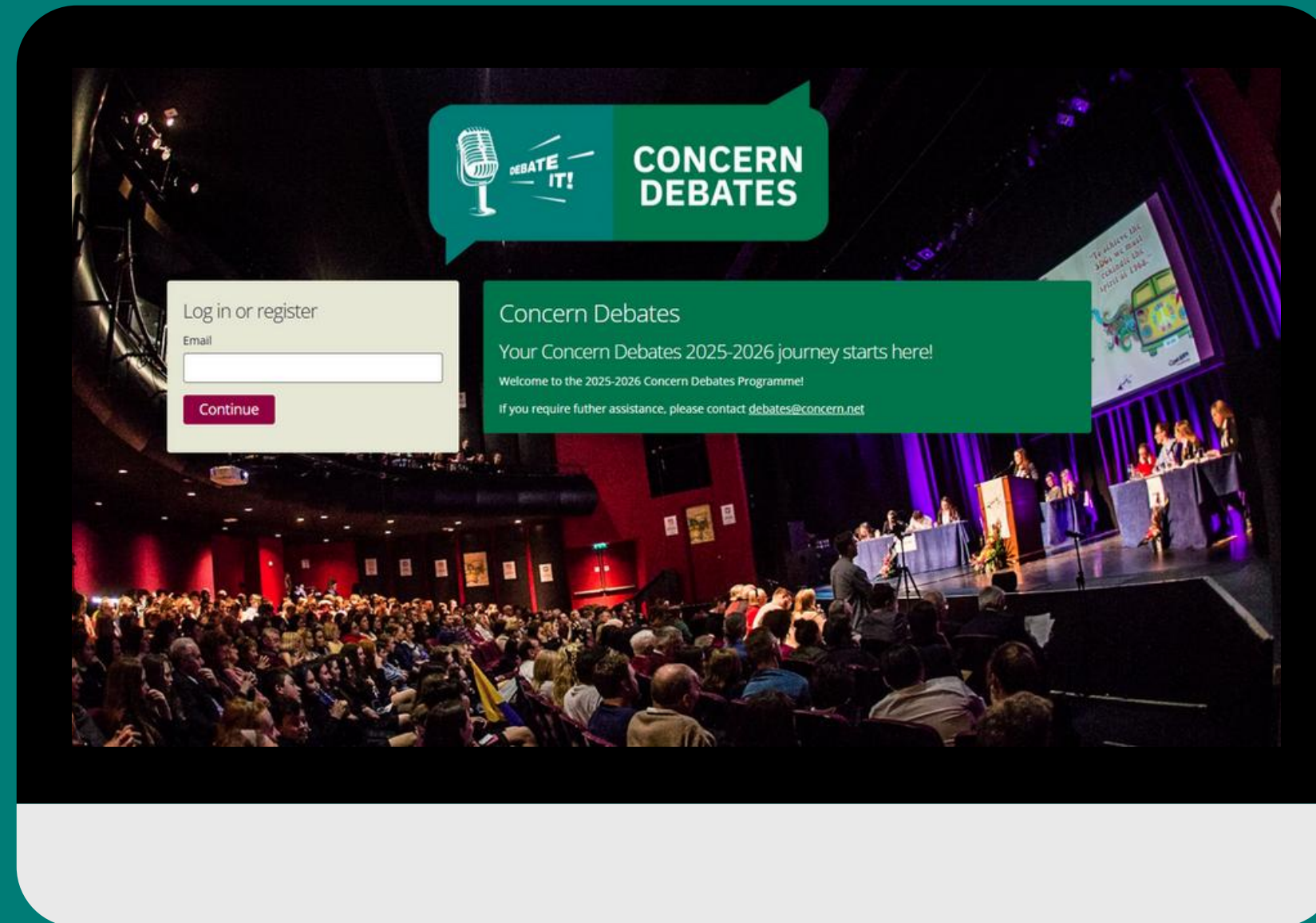
How to register on the Debates Platform



Info for **new** volunteers !!

The Debates Platform allows schools to upload debates quickly and easily and allows adjudicators to view the debates securely from the comfort of their home.

<https://debates.concern.net/>



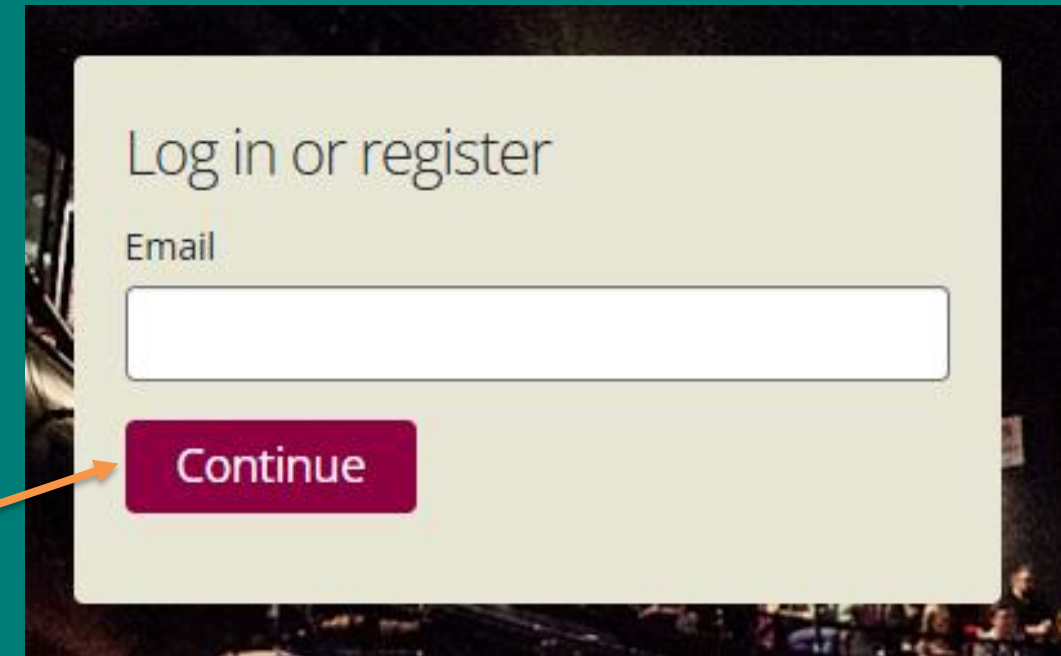
Registration

1. Go to: <https://debates.concern.net/>
2. For returning adjudicators you simply need to put in your email and password. **You do not need to register on the platform again.**

3. For new adjudicators:

In the Log In box please fill in your email address and click the Purple Continue button, the platform will then send you a Security Code that will be valid for 10 minutes, you must fill in that numerical code onto the platform and will be brought to the registration page where you need to fill in your name, email and set a secure password

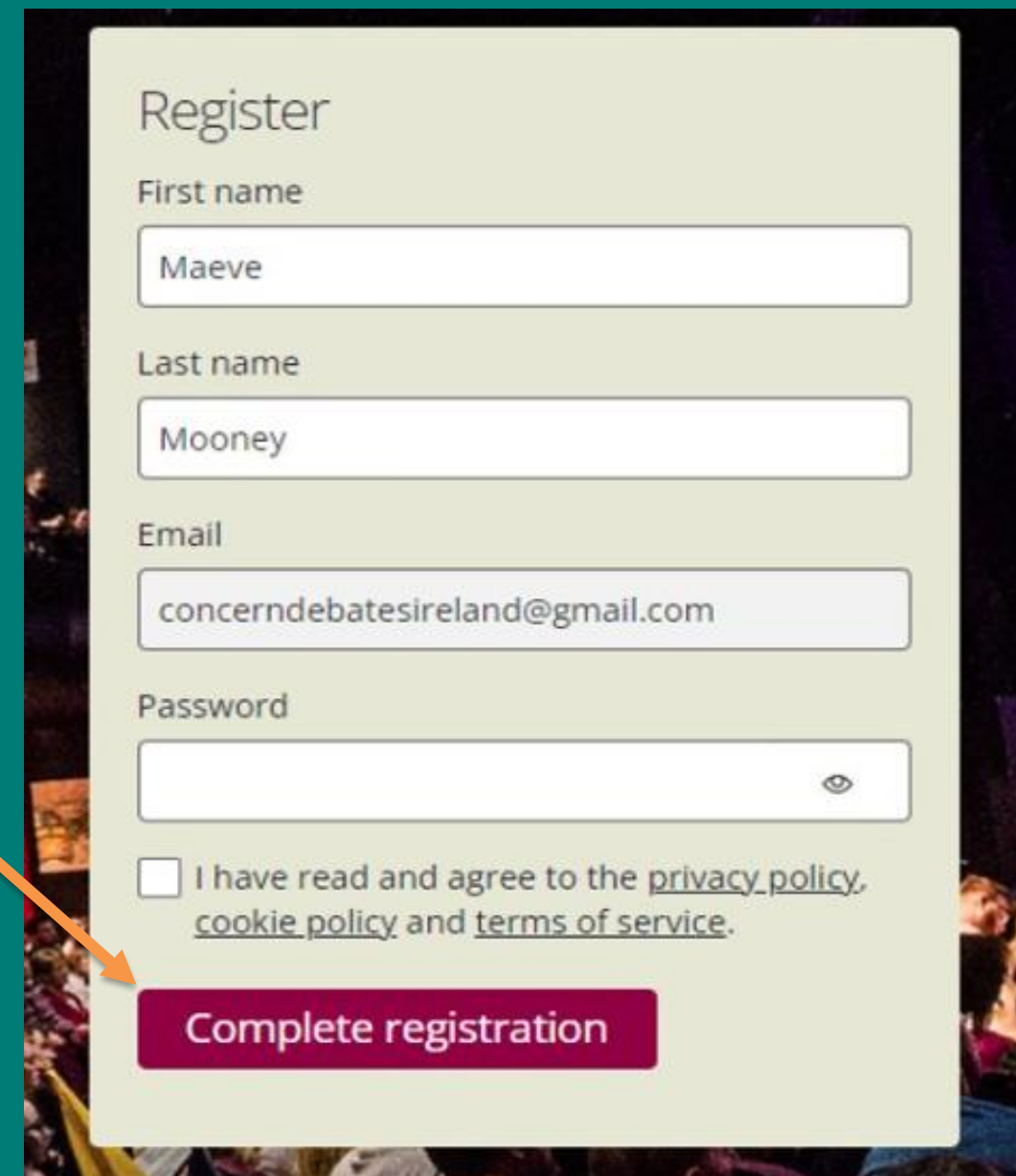
We will inform all new adjudicators when to start their registration process in the second half of September!



Log in or register

Email

Continue



Register

First name

Last name

Email

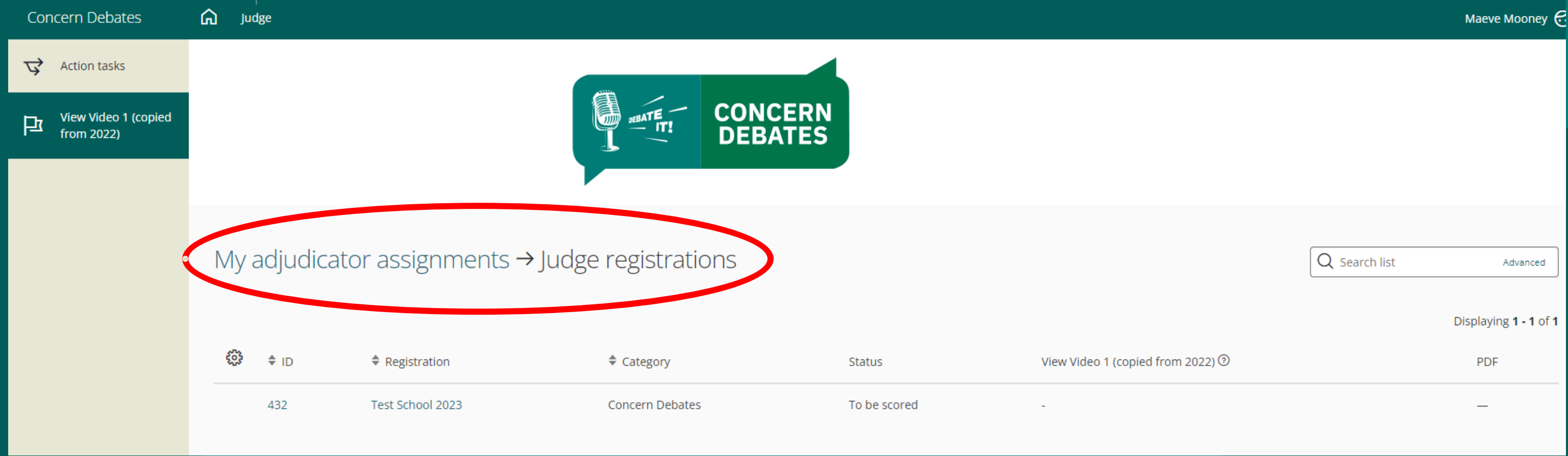
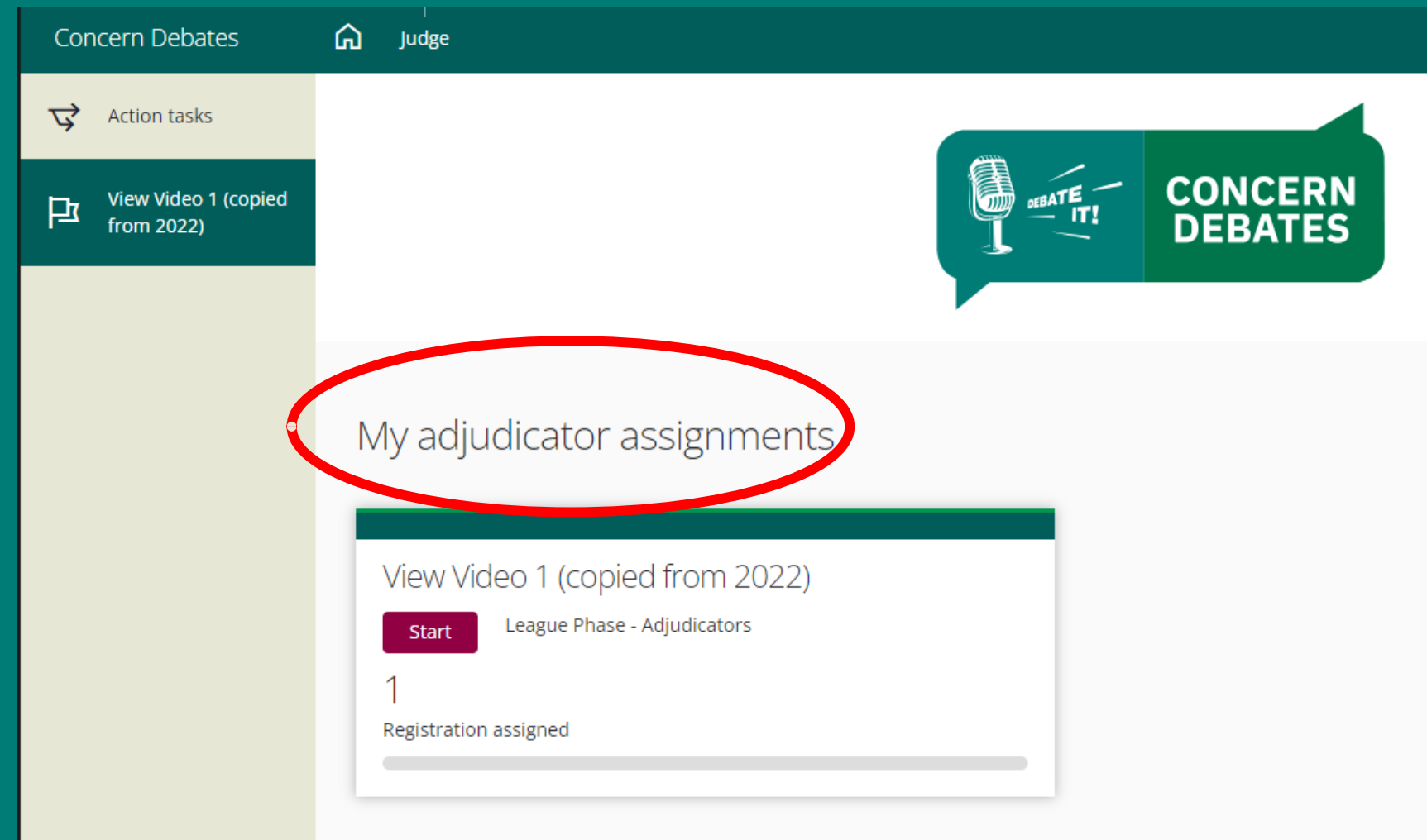
Password

☐ I have read and agree to the [privacy policy](#), [cookie policy](#) and [terms of service](#).

Complete registration

Viewing the debate on the Debates Platform

- When you have agreed to adjudicate a debate, the Debates Team will email to let you know it is available to view on the Debates Platform.
- To view the debate, use your log-in email and saved password. You will then see a video under "**My Adjudicator Assignments -> Judge Registrations**".



Viewing the debate

- Click on the school name and you will see the Debates details and the video available to view.
- Each video will be around 45-50 minutes long. Or 20 min long if recorded in two segments.
- Sometimes the debates will be recorded in two segments if the schools have no professional Zoom account.
- Click the Play button in the middle of the video to watch the debate.

The screenshot displays the 'Concern Debates' website interface. On the left, a sidebar contains a 'Judge registrations' link. The main content area is titled 'Judge registrations → Judge registration' and shows details for a specific debate with ID '19-Concern Debates Concern Debates'. The 'Test School' is listed as 'Test School'. Below this, there are input fields for 'Proposition School' (labeled 'Prop School'), 'Opposition School' (labeled 'Opp School'), and 'Motion'. A 'Video 1' section features a video player with a red circle highlighting the play button. The video thumbnail includes the 'CONCERN worldwide' logo, the title 'WOMEN CHANGE MAKERS', the subtitle 'Women's role in creating a more just, peaceful and equitable world.', the date 'THURSDAY 15TH OCTOBER, 7PM', and the website 'oneworldfestivalni.com'. Navigation buttons '< Previous', 'Next >', and 'Close' are present at the bottom of the page.

Complaints or Issues with the Debates Platform

Problems are rare but may happen!

You can't find the video on the debates platform

- ✓ Email/phone/text your dedicated debates staff member at your earliest opportunity. We will investigate and ensure that the debate is uploaded to the platform and get back to you once the issue is resolved

The audio is very bad and you cannot hear the debate

- ✓ Please turn up the volume on the platform and on your PC. If you still cannot hear the debate, please contact us immediately so we can rectify the issue and inform the schools

The video is missing half of the debate

- ✓ Occasionally teachers need to record the debate in two parts (due to Zoom's 40 minute limitation). When this happens, we'll ask the teachers to upload both recordings. If you cannot find the second half of the debate, please contact us and let us know

Time penalties were not announced on the video

- ✓ If this happens, just let us know and we will contact the schools for time penalties and deduct them from your marks



Interested in adjudicating Concern Primary Debates?

- Debates take place **LIVE** over Zoom during the school day
 - Organised in conjunction with Education Support Centres across Ireland
 - Over 250 Primary Schools take part each year



Email primarydebates@concern.net

Questions?



<https://www.concern.net/schools-and-youth/debates/adjudicators>

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