2027 ITE Collegiate Traffic Bowl

Rules and Instructions for Tournament Games

1.0 Introduction

The Collegiate Traffic Bowl Program includes competitions conducted by ITE sections, districts, and the ITE Traffic Bowl Committee. The student teams winning the district competitions advance to play in the Traffic Bowl Grand Championship, which is conducted at the ITE International Annual Meeting and Exhibit.

For the 2027 Traffic Bowl Program Season, these rules and instructions apply to competitions to qualify teams to participate in the Traffic Bowl Grand Championship that will be held in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Sections of substantive changes from the previous year's rules or particular importance and interest are highlighted:

- in turquoise with the icon NEW for substantive changes from the previous year's rules
- in yellow with the icon ! and in **bold text to** identify areas of particular importance or interest.

2.0 Student Teams and Participant Eligibility

a. The members of a team participating in an ITE Collegiate Traffic Bowl Competition must meet the following requirements. A team shall be comprised of up to four (4) student members. No more than three (3) team members may participate in an individual traffic bowl match. The fourth individual would serve as an alternate team member to replace another team member during a tournament. Substitutions of team members are permitted from one match to another match in the same tournament; however, no substitutions may take place during the play of an individual match.

b. To be eligible to compete, each team member must be enrolled as a full-time student at the university they represent and must be a current International ITE member, either as a student member or professional member. In addition, each team member must be under 30 years of age as of August 1, 2027and therefore, must have been born on or after August 1, 1997.

c. A student should also be a member of their university's chartered ITE student chapter if one exists.

d. If a student has received their undergraduate or graduate diploma in the academic year from August 2026 to June 2027, they may participate as a member of their school's team. The student must meet all other eligibility requirements including the age requirement.

e. A student will not be eligible to participate as a member of their school's team if they have been chartered, registered, or licensed as a professional engineer or received a certification from the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), Professional Standards Board for the Planning Profession in Canada (PSB) or Transportation Professional Certification Board (TPCB).

f. If a student meets the eligibility requirements at the time of their District traffic bowl, they would be eligible to participate, if their team qualifies, in the Grand Championship Traffic Bowl Tournament.

2.1 For District/Section Traffic Bowls

a. Students participating in a District traffic bowl must meet the participant eligibility requirements above. The respective Traffic Bowl Coordinator is responsible for confirming that all students meet these requirements and for notifying the chapter advisor of any eligibility concerns.
b. ITE staff can assist with verifying a participant's age. For assistance, Colleen Agan (cagan@ite.org) with ITE staff may be contacted.
c. Teams comprised of students from two or more schools may compete in a District or Section Traffic Bowl as a combined multi-school team, provided that none of the represented schools has won their District or Section Traffic Bowl during the previous two years.
d. An individual may not be a member of more than one team.
e. At the discretion of the District or Section competition organizing committee, more than one team from the same school or student chapter may compete, subject to the following provisions:
    i. An additional team may be entered from the same school provided that the first team and each additional team from that school have at least two members. Schools with 6 or more members shall have at least one team with 3 members.
    ii. Each team from a school or student chapter that advances from one level of competition to the next must retain the same student roster at each successive level.
    iii. Substitutions to the original team roster may be permitted only because of unforeseen medical circumstances and must be supported by written justification from a medical doctor.
f. When a school has more than one team, teams from the same school should compete against one another during preliminary rounds rather than in a final section or district championship round.
g. If only one school within a District is willing to field a team, the District's Traffic Bowl Committee may designate that team as the District's representative to the Grand Championship.

2.2 Qualifying for the Grand Championship Traffic Bowl Tournament

a. Teams advance to the ITE Collegiate Traffic Bowl Grand Championship Tournament by winning their respective ITE District's Collegiate Traffic Bowl competition.
b. If a member of a qualifying team is unable to participate in the Grand Championship event, the team shall substitute with an alternate who meets the above eligibility requirements. A team that wins a district traffic bowl must have a minimum of 50% of its original members who participated in the district competition present to participate in the Grand Championship tournament.
c. If a district winning team cannot participate in the Grand Championship, the District's Executive Board or its Traffic Bowl Committee may select an alternate team. The alternate should be either the 2nd or 3rd place team in the district's traffic bowl competition.
d. The same team member substitution requirements shall apply to any alternate team selected to represent a district. If a member of the selected team is unable to participate in the Grand Championship, an eligible alternate may be substituted from the same school. However, at least 50% of the team participating in the Grand Championship should consist of members who competed for that team at the district event.

2.3 Appeal or Questions about Eligibility

Appeals or questions regarding the eligibility requirements should be directed to the ITE Traffic Bowl Committee and its chair John Davis at jadavis@dmgov.org.

3.0 Competition Category and Clue Resources

The competition will include categories and clues with relevance to traffic and transportation knowledge commensurate and reflective of the knowledge base of university students. The categories and clues will typically include topics in the subject areas of ITE, transportation engineering and planning, general transportation knowledge, rules of the road, current events in surface transportation, as well as popular culture topics (such as movies, music, sports, etc.) and general knowledge that are related to transportation planning and engineering. Clues may also employ fundamental knowledge from post-secondary course work, such as basic math and science principles.

Informational or reference sources for clues and responses (answers and questions) for the traffic bowl competition will include, but are not limited to, the following reference documents or sources:

1. ITE Traffic Engineering Handbook, Digital Edition. (Available with ITE membership user ID and password to access at ITE Traffic Engineering Handbook, Digital Edition - Institute of Transportation Engineers)
2. Transportation Planning Handbook, 4th Edition (Available for purchase of hardcover book through ITE Bookstore at Transportation Planning Handbook details or as a PDF or e-book through other vendors, such as Transportation Planning Handbook 4th Edition – PDF/EPUB Version Downloadable – Enjoiy Store)
3. The Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book Key Issues for Transportation Decisionmakers, Officials, and Staff, FHWA-HEP-18-015 (Available online or as a free PDF download at The Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book: Key Issues for Transportation Decisionmakers, Officials, and Staff)
4. Road Safety Fundamentals: Concepts, Strategies, and Practices that Reduce Fatalities and Injuries on the Road, Report No: FHWA-SA-18-003, November 2017. (Available online or as a free PDF download at Road Safety Fundamentals | FHWA (dot.gov))
5. NEW USDOT Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD-US), 11th Edition with Revision 1, December 2025. (Available online or free PDF downloads at MUTCD 11th Edition - FHWA MUTCD)
6. Ontario Traffic Manuals, Books 1 through 19, Ontario Traffic Council. (Available as free PDF downloads at Free Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) PDF Downloads (ramudden.ca) or SydneyEnterprise: Portal (gov.on.ca)) Note: The Ontario Traffic Manual, Books 1 through 19, published by the Ontario Traffic Council, is used as a reference because it provides a representative source for the application of traffic control devices in Canada and is available online at no cost.
7. Highway Capacity Manual, 7th Edition: A Guide for Multimodal Mobility Analysis (Available for purchase of hardcover book at https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26432/highway-capacity-manual-7th-edition-a-guide-for-multimodal-mobility)(HCQS Committee - HCM)

8. Canadian Capacity Guide for Signalized Intersections, 3rd Edition, February 2008 (Available as a free PDF download at Canadian Capacity Guide for Signalized Intersections - 3rd Edition (2008) - ITE Canada)
9. ITE Web site, www.ite.org – clues will be drawn primarily from material on ITE leadership, governance, and structure; current activities and events; history of meetings, officers, and awards; and information on ITE publications.

The clues and responses will be presented in English to the teams, both in a spoken form by the emcee and on a visual display using a large projector screen or monitor. Both English and Metric units of measure will be accepted as answers/responses. Clues may contain graphics, photos, or equations.

4.0 Traffic Bowl Competition Structures

The competition structures of ITE Traffic Bowl Tournaments at a section or district level will vary based on the number of teams participating and may have preliminary rounds of play with winners advancing three to four schools to a final match. The Grand Championship Traffic Bowl is expected to have 10 teams competing with three semi-final matches leading to a final match.

Prior to the start of an ITE Traffic Bowl Tournament, a meeting with all participating teams will be conducted. At this meeting, the rules of competition will be reviewed, questions addressed, and teams seeded and placed into the competition bracket. **Attendance at this meeting is mandatory for all teams.** Details regarding the date, time, location, and/or online connection will be provided to teams in advance.

The method of seeding will depend on the number of participating teams. Seeding establishes the organization of matches, seating positions, and which team will select the first category and clue. The size and structure of the competition bracket will also be based on the number of teams competing:

- Five or more teams: A preliminary qualification round (or rounds) will be conducted to identify up to four teams to advance to the final match, where a Section or District champion will be determined.
- For the Grand Championship: The bracket will consist of three semi-final matches, one with four teams and two with three teams each. The winning teams of these semi-final matches will advance to the final championship round.

Seeding and bracketing will be determined either by a **blind draw** (e.g., slips of paper with team names) or a **seeding quiz** (see description below). The chosen method will be communicated to all participating teams prior to the event. The **highest seed team in each match** will select the first category and clue.

Based on their seeding position, with **#1 representing the highest seed**, teams will be placed into the bracket accordingly. Teams will then be seated in each match as follows:

- **Red position:** Top seed in the match
- **Yellow position:** Second-highest seed
- **Green position:** Third-highest seed
- **Green Arrow position:** Lowest seed

4.1 Seeding Quiz

If a seeding quiz is utilized if in person or virtually, it should feature 10 questions and a tiebreaker. Each team, including the alternate members, will have **10 minutes** to complete the quiz together.

The quiz form can either be a paper-based or electronic (virtual). A second tiebreaker to determine seeding position will be for the teams tied to write down a number from 1 to 100, inclusive. The team matching or closest to the number chosen by the tournament coordinator without going over will receive the seeding position and the next closest team without going over will receive the next available seeding position. This would continue until all teams are seeded. Questions for the quiz are drawn from the reference documents listed previously.

For the administration of a quiz, teams will be seated at separate tables. *Refer to the Traffic Bowl Handbook for additional details.*

5.0 Competition Format

For each set of matches, the following competition format will be used for the Grand Championship Traffic Bowl and for all other traffic bowl competitions.

Preliminary or Semi-final Match (approximately 30 minutes) (actual number of matches depending on number of teams) format:

- **Introductions** of teams and team members
- **First Round** will feature **25** clues/questions in **5** categories with **5** clues in each category. The game play will feature "buzz-in and writing categories" (*for descriptions and details refer to General Rules of Play-Overview Section item #4a and Play of First Round Section items #2 and #3*) and will continue until all clues are dispatched or a 12-minute time limit has been reached. **One clue will be designated as a "Daily Double."** Each clue will be assigned point values of 100, 200, 300, 400, or 500.
- **Final Clue** (one category and one clue/question), points to be determined by team.
- **Tiebreakers**: If there is a tie after the final clue, an additional question will be given by the emcee, using the "buzz in" format of the First Round. (*For further details refer to Tiebreaker Round Play Section and General Rules of Play-Overview Section item #2*.)
- **Intermissions**: A 3-minute break between matches.

Final Match (approximately 30 minutes) format:

The teams advancing from the preliminary or semi-final matches (if conducted) will compete in the final match. The method for advancement to the final match will be described in the competition bracket.

- **Introductions** of teams and team members
- **First Round** for the Final Match will feature **25** clues/questions in **5** categories with **5** clues in each category. The game play will feature "buzz-in and writing categories" (*for descriptions and details refer to General Rules of Play-Overview Section item #4a and Play of First Round Section items #2 and #3*) and will continue until all clues are dispatched. **Two clues will be designated as a "Daily Double."** Each clue will be assigned point values of 100, 200, 300, 400, or 500.
- **Final Clue** (one clue/question), points to be determined by team.
- **Tiebreakers**: If there is a tie after the final clue, an additional question will be given by the emcee, using the "buzz in" format of the First Round. (*For further details refer to Tiebreaker Round Play Section and General Rules of Play-Overview Section item #2*.)

6.0 General Rules of Play

6.1 OVERVIEW

1. **Team Composition**
   Each team will consist of up to three (3) individuals, with a maximum of four (4) teams competing in the same match.

2. **Seeding of Teams**
   Prior to each match, teams will have been assigned a seeding position through a random draw or other means (with #1 being the highest seed) and placed in the competition bracket.

3. **Seating Position of Teams**
   For each match, teams will be seated as follows:

   - **Red position:** Top seed in the match
   - **Yellow position:** Second-highest seed
   - **Green position:** Third-highest seed
   - **Green Arrow position:** Lowest seed

4. **Clue Structure and Scoring**
   Contestants will be presented with clues, attempting to provide correct responses. Clues will be organized **into five categories, each containing five clues**. Each clue will be assigned a point value of 100, 200, 300, 400, or 500. Responses to clues should be phrased in the form of a question.

   a. **Categories will either have "buzz in" or "writing" responses**.
   The type of response required for each category will be revealed during gameplay. Two (2) categories will require written responses, while the remaining categories will follow a "buzz-in" format. The two "Writing" categories will be selected immediately prior to the competition by the Emcee, Event Judges, and Event Coordinator using a random process. The selected categories will remain confidential until revealed during the competition. (For additional details refer to Play of First Round Section items #2 and #3 below.)

   Special Note: If a correct response is given without proper phrasing, **points will not be deducted**, and the response will still be recognized as correct.

   b. **Daily Double Clues**
   During each match, one or two clues will be designated as "Daily Double" clues. Any category or clue value may be designated as a daily double. *(For details refer to Play of First Round Section item #7.)*

5. **Recording Prohibition**
   Audience members and participants are prohibited from recording matches and their contents (clues, questions, responses, answers) by any means. The emcee will announce this prohibition at the start of the event.

6.2 PLAY OF FIRST ROUND

1. **Clue Presentation and Category Types**
   During the first round, clues will be concurrently displayed for all teams and read aloud by the Master of Ceremonies (emcee).

   a. During the game there will be categories **("Buzz In" Categories)** that will require teams to press a signal button if they wish to answer.
   Play on this type of category is outlined in item #2 below.

   b. There will also be categories **("Writing" Categories)** that will **not** require teams to press a signal button if they wish to answer, but rather **all teams will participate** by writing their response in the form of a question on a card or dry erase board using a thick-tip pen. The identity of these categories will only be revealed when any clue in that category is selected. *Play on this type of category is outlined in item #3 below.*

2. **For Categories Requiring Signal Buttons to be Pressed ("Buzz In" Categories)**

   a. **Upon Category Selection**
   The emcee will announce the category and clue value selected. The clue will be read aloud by the emcee and concurrently displayed for all teams.

   b. **Signaling After Clue is Read**
   Once the emcee has completed reading a clue, teams will have **12 seconds** to press their signal button if they wish to answer. The first team (or individual on a team) to signal and be recognized by the emcee will be given the first opportunity to respond. After being recognized by the Emcee, the team has **12 seconds** to confer and provide their response. **When the emcee recognizes the team, they will state, for example, "Faber College, you now have 12 seconds to answer."**

   c. **Interrupting the Clue**
   After a clue is displayed, a team may signal and interrupt the emcee's reading. **Upon recognition, THE TEAM MUST RESPOND IMMEDIATELY AND WITHOUT CONFERRING. An incorrect or delayed response will result in a deduction from their score equal to the clue's value. When the emcee recognizes the team, they will state, for example, "Faber College, your answer."**

   Following the first interruption, the emcee will re-read the clue once for the remaining teams, who may also interrupt and respond under the same rules and penalties. The clue will not be read a third time.

   d. **Incorrect or Delayed Response by First Team**
   If the first team responds incorrectly or fails to respond within the **12-second limit**, the emcee will verbally declare the answer incorrect and offer a clue to the remaining teams. These teams will have **12 seconds** to press their signal button if they wish to answer, with the first signaling team being recognized by the emcee. This time limit does not apply when the emcee's first reading of a clue is interrupted.

   e. **Subsequent Incorrect Responses**
   If the next team answers incorrectly or does not respond within **12 seconds**, the emcee will

again declare the answer incorrect and offer the clue to any remaining teams, following the same procedure. This time limit does not apply when the emcee's second reading of a clue is interrupted.

f. **Completion of Attempts**
This process will continue until all teams have either responded or declined to answer. Once complete, the emcee will proceed to the selection of the next clue.

g. **Scoring for Correct and Incorrect Responses**
A correct response adds the clue's value to the team's score, while an incorrect or no response deducts the clue's value from the team's score.

h. **Board Control for Correct Responses**
The team that answers correctly will subsequently control the board and select the next category and clue value. The process will then repeat for each clue.

i. **Retaining Board Control**
If no team responds correctly, the team that originally selected the clue will retain control of the board and may choose the next category and value. The process will then repeat.

3. **For Categories Requiring Written Responses to be Given ("Writing" Categories)**

a. **Upon Category Selection**
When a category requiring written responses is selected, a signal will be given, and the Emcee will announce that it is a "writing" category in which **all teams** will participate. Regardless of the clue value chosen, the Emcee will begin with the 100-point clue and proceed in ascending order through the remaining clues. Teams will not select individual clue values during this category, and the category will conclude once all clues have been completed.

b. **Responses by Teams to a Clue**
Once the clue has been displayed and read, ALL teams will have **12 seconds** to write their response in the form of a question on a card or dry erase board using a thick-tip pen. With three seconds remaining, the Emcee will begin a verbal countdown: **"3…2…1…pens down!"**

c. **Revealing Responses**
After **12 seconds**, the emcee will call "pens down" and ASK THE TEAMS TO REVEAL THEIR RESPONSES SIMULTANEOUSLY. Responses will be judged solely on the written responses; no verbal clarification or explanation will be considered. ***Note: Judges must review all written responses before announcing which are correct. The Emcee will verbally confirm the Judges' decision for each team going left to right starting with the red position.***

d. **Scoring**
Teams with correct responses will have the clue's value **added to their score**. If a team's response is incorrect or no response is provided, points will **NOT** be deducted from their score.

e. **Board Control for Correct Responses**
After a "written" category has been concluded, the team that selected the category initially will retain control of the board and select the next category and clue.

4. **Start of the First Round**
   The team in the red position will select the first category and clue value. ***For the Grand Championship's Final Match, the team scoring the most points in the semi-finals will select first***.

5. **Special Clue Categories**
   
   For categories that include clues featuring abbreviations, acronyms, graphics, letter scrambles, audio, or video, the Emcee will not read the clue aloud. Teams may press their buttons or begin writing a response as soon as these clues are displayed. These categories will be identified to participants at the beginning of and again when they are presented during the match.

6. **Name Responses**
   When responding with names, the full name or last name will be accepted unless the clue specifically requests only the first name.

7. **Response Phrasing in the Form of a Question**
   
   If a response is correct but **not phrased in the form of a question**, no points will be deducted, and the response will be accepted. There will also be **no penalty for incorrect grammar**.

8. **Daily Double Clues**
   During each match, one or two clues will be designated as "Daily Double" clues. Only the team that selects a Daily Double clue may respond to it. However, if the "Daily Double" clue is found in a "writing" category, ALL teams will be eligible to place a wager based on their own score and write a respond to the clue.

   a. **Wagering**: The team(s) will wager any whole number from zero (0) to an amount up to either their current cumulative score or 500 points, whichever is greater.

      - **For a "buzz in" category,** the team selecting the clue will verbally declare their wager prior to the reveal and reading of the clue by the emcee.
      - **For a "writing" category,** each team may make a wager and will write their wager on a piece of paper with a felt tipped marker prior to the reveal and reading of the clue by the emcee.
        
        Note for a "writing" category, teams wagering 500 points or fewer will not lose points for an incorrect response. However, teams wagering more than 500 points will have the full amount of their wager deducted from their score if their response is incorrect

   b. **Clue and Response Time:** After wagers are submitted, the emcee will read the Clue. Teams will then have **12 seconds** to response verbally for a "buzz-in" category clue or in writing for a "writing" category clue in the form of a question on a second sheet of blank paper or dry erase board using a thick-tip pen.

   c. **Revealing Responses and Wagers:** After **12 seconds,** the emcee will call for a response.

      - **For a "buzz in" category,** the team selecting the clue will verbally give their response.
      - **For a "writing" category,** ALL teams will show their responses simultaneously and then their wagers. **NOTE: The Judges should review ALL responses before rendering a discussion on correctness.**

d. **Scoring for a Daily Double**:

- **In a "Buzz in" category**: If a team responds correctly, the value of their wager will be added to their score; if the response is incorrect, the wagered amount will be deducted.
- **In a "Writing" category**: Teams with correct responses will have their wager **added to their score**; Teams with incorrect or blank responses and **wagering 500 points or fewer will not lose points;** Teams with incorrect or blank responses and **wagering more than 500 points** will have the **full amount of their wager deducted from their score**.

e. **Championship Matches**: In matches that determine a District Champion or Grand Champion, two Daily Double clues will be designated.

6.3 PLAY OF FINAL CLUE ROUND

1. **Structure of the Final Clue Round**
   The Final Clue Round consists of a single category with one clue.
2. **Eligibility**
   Teams with a cumulative point total of zero or higher at the end of the first round may participate in the Final Clue Round.
3. **Category and Wagering**
   The category for the Final Clue will be displayed, and each eligible team (***with a point total zero or higher***) will make a wager any whole number amount up to their total score.
4. **Recording Wagers**
   Teams will have up to **60 seconds** to record their wager on a blank sheet of paper using a thick felt-tip pen. A designated person from each team will write the wager, which will be revealed later.
5. **Final Clue and Response Time**
   After wagers are submitted, the emcee will read the final clue. Teams will then have **30 seconds** to write their response in the form of a question on a second sheet of blank paper or dry erase board using a thick-tip pen.
6. **Revealing Responses and Wagers**
   After **30 seconds**, the emcee will call "**pens down**" and begin with the team holding the lowest score, instructing them to first "**show your response**," followed by "**show your wager**." This process will continue in order from the lowest to the highest scoring team. Responses will be judged solely on the written responses; no verbal clarification or explanation will be accepted.
7. **Scoring the Final Clue**
   If a team's response is incorrect or no response is provided, their wagered amount will be deducted from their score. If the response is correct, the wagered amount will be added to their score.
8. **Determining the Winner**
   The team with the highest score after the Final Clue Round will be declared the winner of the match.
9. **Special Case for Zero or Negative Scores**
   If no team has a point total above zero or if all teams have negative scores after the first round, wagering will be skipped. The team that answers the Final Clue correctly will be declared the winner.

6.4 TIEBREAKER ROUND PLAY – SPECIAL END OF MATCH PROVISION

1. **Eligibility for Tiebreaker Round**
   If two or more teams are tied for the lead after the Final Clue; those teams will participate in a Tiebreaker Round.

   Special Case: If no team is declared the winner after the Final Clue and the teams participating in the Final Clue have point totals of zero, they will be eligible for the Tiebreaker Round. For example, if Teams A and B wagered all their points and answered the Final Clue incorrectly, resulting in scores of zero, and Teams C and D also ended with zero points after the first round (and were therefore unable to wager), all teams with a score of zero at the end of the Final Clue (Teams A, B, C, and D) will advance to the **Tiebreaker Round**.

2. **Structure of the Tiebreaker Round**
   The Tiebreaker Round consists of a single clue from a new category. It follows the same rules as the First Round of Play. The first team to signal in after the emcee completes reading the clue and to answer correctly will win the match.

3. **Continued Play if No Correct Response**
   If no team responds correctly to the first Tiebreaker clue, additional categories and clues will be played until a winning team is determined.

6.5 DECISIONS AND CHALLENGES

During the competition, it shall be the responsibility of the Judges to rule on the correctness of responses, on any challenge to the rules, and to make final decisions.

The Judges' decisions shall be final and shall stand without recourse.

