INTRODUCTION:
This year, at CWRUMUN, the Secretariat is pleased to offer an Ad Hoc Committee, which has its own unique rules leading up to the conference. Listed below are a few key questions that delegates or their advisors may have surrounding this special kind of committee.

WHAT DOES AD HOC EVEN MEAN?
Literally, it translates to “at or during the fact,” but in Model United Nations contexts it means a committee or body that immediately responds to an event or a crisis. In the context of the UN, it usually refers to a style of committee, especially tribunals, which convene as needed in response to specific events.

SO, THIS IS A CRISIS COMMITTEE?
Yes, it is. All “Ad Hoc” committees are going to be crisis-based because of the immediacy of the problem at hand.

WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT?
Ad Hoc committees are unique in that delegates are only given the background/study guide one week to one day in advance of the beginning of the conference. This means that delegates – though, as a staffer, I would like to think that there was still extensive preparation – rely more on their skills as delegates instead of their ability to load a binder full of research. In other words, there are no crutches in an Ad Hoc committee, just one’s ability to function as a delegate being laid fully out on the table.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE IN AN “AD HOC” COMMITTEE?
Just like in every committee, chairs look for a few key things. Namely: speaking and writing skills, the ability to come up with creative solutions to complex problems, negotiations and teamwork, as well as demonstrating mastery of the subject matter. As a crisis committee (see attached crisis guide), the Crisis Director will look for the ability to balance “front room” and “back room” skills. They are largely the same, but executed in dramatically different ways. Ad Hoc committees, however, put the onus on creativity and flexibility – the margins of what a delegate can get away with are substantially greater, as a result, due to the limited preparation delegates will have.

ANY SPECIFIC TIPS?
This is something that (ironically) goes without saying, but is important to note: Speak. All. Of. The. Time. The chairs will stop delegates from dominating a conversation/committee session by speaking too much, so they should not worry about talking too much. Speaking is an excellent way to not only
demonstrate that one is engaged in the overall conversation of the committee, but also to verbally process and enhance ideas. Though factions will, of course, arise in committees, crisis committee members are ultimately all trying to achieve the same goal (even though it may be in different ways); debate is so important in ensuring that the best ideas are fleshed out and built upon.

Ask questions. Both of the other delegates and of the chairs/backroom. There’s no such thing as too much information/understanding, and it makes a delegate seem more engaged and interested in the committee as a whole. Because crisis committees are almost permanently in moderated caucuses, it’s incredibly easy to ask clarifying questions and be critically engaged in debate. It’s also a unique format, so no delegate should limit their ability to succeed by not reaching out to the chairs.

Just like with speaking, writing is critically important to success in committee. The front room and back room elements are equally important, so delegates should always be writing; if no new developments have occurred, write to crisis. If a delegate is waiting for crisis, write directives. There are limits on how many crisis notes may be in transit at any point in time, but that also means there should never be a moment delegates aren’t waiting for a response from crisis. Crisis notes can be as simple as checking on the status of crisis arcs, assessing resources, or spying on other members of committee; these are simple but essential to ensuring success.

Every delegate should be willing to work with any other delegate in the room. Even the US and the DPRK agree on certain fundamental issues, so diplomacy is a must. Also, developing dependencies on other members of a crisis committee can be literally deadly; always look to work with new groups and delegations, it’s something that crisis will look for in BOTH frontroom AND backroom. Collaboration is the only way to achieve the goals of the committee, and crisis may make it difficult at times, but any determined committee ought to be able to accomplish their ultimate goals.

Delegates need to have faith in themselves and their partners (if applicable). Every student at CWRUMUN is capable of doing incredible things in the committee room; flexibility and creativity are the hallmarks of the best delegates, but they’re existent in every single delegate on the circuit. With confidence in themselves, each delegate will find the capacity to respond to every wrench thrown into the works, even if it isn’t apparent at first.

ADAPTED FROM: https://bestdelegate.com/ad-hoc-committees-an-introduction-some-tips-on-how-to-succeed/

Please feel free to ask any lingering questions about the format of committee to Jacob Guthrie, the Crisis Director for this committee, at jdg124@case.edu.