



**Official Rules & Regulations**

**Games Competition**

**2013 Season**

## OVERVIEW

The Imagine Cup Games Competition honors the best student games built on Microsoft platforms. We're looking for fun, original games that are well-made and could find an enthusiastic audience. Game themes and content are up to you, but please keep the content suitable for a teenage audience or younger.

The Games Competition may be structured differently based on the country/region you are representing. Please make sure to read your local country/region competition rules (if applicable) to better understand how to compete in this competition.

If you choose to compete in this Competition, then you agree that your participation is subject to the following:

- The Imagine Cup Official Rules
- The Imagine Cup Games Competition Official Rules and Regulations described below.

## WHAT ARE THE START AND END DATES?

This Competition starts at 00:01 Greenwich Mean Time ("GMT") on 30 August 2012 and ends in July 2013 ("Entry Period") and will consist of two separate rounds as follows:

| ROUND   | START DATE<br>(all times 00:01 GMT) | END DATE<br>(all times 23:59 GMT) |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Competition Registration Period</b><br>You must register your team at <a href="http://www.ImagineCup.com">www.ImagineCup.com</a> by the end date to compete. | 30 August 2012                      | 15 March 2013                     |
| <b>Round 1 – Local Finals/Online Finals</b>   | 30 August 2012                      | 15 April 2013                     |
| <b>Round 2 – Worldwide Finals</b>   | July 2013                           | July 2013                         |

## CAN I ENTER?

You are eligible to enter if you meet the eligibility criteria detailed in the [Imagine Cup Official Rules & Regulations](#)

## HOW DO I ENTER?

To enter Round 1, visit <http://www.imaginecup.com> and register as instructed **by March 15, 2013**. Rules regarding the size of your team, the role of the team mentor, academic institution and national residency requirements, and other information can be found in the "Teams and Mentors" section of the [Imagine Cup Official Rules & Regulations](#)

You cannot compete in the 2013 Imagine Cup if you have not registered by March 15, 2013.

## HOW DO THE COMPETITION ROUNDS WORK?

Below is an overview of what to expect for each round of the competition.

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## Round 1 – Local Finals/Online Finals

If the country or region you are representing holds a Local Final for the Games Competition, Round 1 will be governed by your local competition rules and those rules may be structured differently. Please make sure to review your local country competition rules (if applicable) for a list of materials your Team is required to submit in addition to those requirements listed here. In many Local Finals you'll be invited to deliver the following materials:

- ☐ **Live Presentation** of your game to a panel of judges at the Local Final. This presentation should address what your game's premise is and what makes it innovative and desirable, as well as illustrate its key features including genre, style and platform.
- ☐ **Game Prototype** playable by the judges
- ☐ **Game Play Instructions** document explaining how to play your game
- ☐ **Game Trailer** video of thirty seconds to promote your game online

Whether you compete in a Local Final or not, you may choose to compete in the Online Finals which are run through [www.imaginecup.com](http://www.imaginecup.com). For the Online Finals, you are required to submit the following materials:

- ☐ **Overview Video** to compete against other students from around the world in the Online Finals. As with the Live Presentation, the video should address what your game's premise is and what makes it innovative and desirable, as well as illustrate its key features, including genre, style and platform.
- ☐ **Game Prototype** playable by the judges
- ☐ **Game Play Instructions** document explaining how to play your game
- ☐ **Game Trailer** video of thirty seconds to promote your game online

For both the Local and Online Finals, requirements for the live presentation, overview video, prototype, instructions, and trailer all appear later in these rules in the "Content and Technical Requirements" section.

**Round 1 Advancement:** Each Local Final Games Competition results in one winner. From among the winners of all competitions held in a given Local Final (including Games, World Citizenship, and Innovation) the Local Final will choose the **overall best entry** as that country's National Imagine Cup Team and advance that team to the Worldwide Finals where they will compete in their chosen competition. The National Imagine Cup Team may be from any competition included in a given Local Final. Any Local Final competition winners not chosen to be their country's National Imagine Cup Team are instead automatically included in the Online Finals so they have a second chance to win a slot in the Worldwide Finals.

The Online Finals results in two or more teams from each competition advancing to round 2. The total number of teams advanced from the Online Finals will be dependent on the merits of the entrants and the competitive needs of the Worldwide Finals.

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## Round 2 – Worldwide Finals

All teams who advance to round 2 will be brought at Microsoft's expense to the Worldwide Finals event where the last round of competition occurs. Information regarding transportation and meals can be found in the Official Rules in the "Travel Prize Conditions" section.

Round 2 competitors must submit the following materials:

- ☐ Updated **Overview Video** that best represents the latest version of your project
- ☐ **Live Presentation** to be delivered to a panel of judges at the Worldwide Finals
- ☐ Updated **Game Prototype** playable by the judges
- ☐ Updated **Game Play Instructions** document explaining how to play your game
- ☐ Updated **Game Trailer** video of thirty seconds to promote your game online

In this round you will give your Live Presentation, receive feedback from the judges on it, make any final changes, and then submit a final game prototype for hands-on evaluation by the judges.

**Winning Round 2:** The judges at the Worldwide Finals event will choose first, second, and third place winners for the Games Competition.

### HOW WILL ENTRIES BE JUDGED?

In every round, each entry will receive a score of 1-100, based on the following criteria. Entries are re-evaluated at each round on the basis of the latest version of the game so your continued development progress may raise your next score.

| Criteria                  | Description  | Weighting  |
|---------------------------|--|------------|
| <b>Fun</b>                | Is the game exciting? Is the concept clear? Is there good player feedback? Is the game appropriately challenging? Does the player want to keep coming back for more?   | <b>40%</b> |
| <b>Execution</b>          | Does it look good for its chosen art style? Are the sound effects and music well done? Does it play smoothly and reliably? Is the in-game UI clear and useful? Are there good usability features such as player help, tutorials, and game pause? | <b>30%</b> |
| <b>Innovation</b>         | Does it notably improve upon an existing genre? Does it create a new genre or deliver a unique play experience? Does it deliver innovation in storytelling, art direction, or other aesthetic areas?   | <b>20%</b> |
| <b>Business Viability</b> | Is there a clear audience for this game? Does the team clearly identify "back of the box" highlights for why someone should buy this game? What does the development and publishing roadmap look like after the competition?                     | <b>10%</b> |

## WHAT ARE THE PRIZES?

**Round 1:** Each Local Final competition may offer prizes at the discretion of the local Microsoft subsidiary operating that competition. The existence, nature, and conditions of such prizes are subject to the rules of each Local Final.

**Round 2:** Every National Imagine Cup Team and Online Imagine Cup Team advanced from round 1, as well as one (1) Mentor per winning team, will receive a trip to the Imagine Cup 2013 Worldwide Finals in St. Petersburg, Russia in July, 2013, to compete at the Worldwide Finals. Trip includes round trip coach airfare from a major airport closest to each competitor's home, standard hotel accommodations, and select meals and activities.

At the Worldwide Finals, the top three teams in the Games Competition will receive the following cash prizes. (Mentors will not be awarded any portion of the monetary prize winnings.)

- **First Place:** \$50,000 USD, to be divided equally among each officially registered member of the Team
- **Second Place:** \$10,000 USD, to be divided equally among each officially registered member of the Team
- **Third Place:** \$5,000 USD, to be divided equally among each officially registered member of the Team

## CONTENT AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

All games must be built using Microsoft tools and technologies. The application must be developed using at least one product in the Visual Studio family and must be built for one or more of the following platforms:

- Windows
- Windows Phone
- Kinect SDK
- Xbox Indie Games

As a student, you can obtain free tools and software at [DreamSpark](#).

In addition, all entries must meet the following requirements for the Overview Video, Game Prototype, Gameplay Instructions, Game Trailer, and Live Presentation:

### Overview Video

The Overview Video is a video in .WMV format that depicts the functionality of your Team's game and provides an opportunity for your Team to reiterate what you are trying to achieve and why it's great, as well as to demonstrate some of the key features. The emphasis of the video should be on the game itself; video production quality will not be scored in the judging process. Your Team should show the game in action.

If you have not captured video of software before, we recommend creating your screen capture using Microsoft Expression Encoder 4 Screen Capture which is available to students for free at DreamSpark.

**The Overview Video must be submitted as a .WMV file which meets the following requirements:**

1. Your Team's video content must clearly address each of the **Judging Criteria** outlined in these rules.
2. The audio of the video can be in any language, but if the audio is not in the English language, the video must have English subtitles in order to be eligible. If a translator is needed, you are responsible for procuring one.
3. The video must include the Imagine Cup Intro Clip (the clip can be found and downloaded from <http://compete.imaginecup.com/resources/>)
4. The video must not exceed ten minutes, including the Imagine Cup Intro Clip.
5. The final .WMV video file must not exceed 250 MB.
6. Your Team's game shown in the video must be fully functional and implemented. Previz, storyboards, concept art, and other mock-ups are not acceptable for the Overview Video.

**Game Prototype**

We need to be able to play your game in order to judge your game! The Game Prototype is defined as an installable and playable Game in the appropriate format for your chosen platform(s).

**The Game Prototype must meet the following requirements:**

1. Your game must be in one of the following formats for installation:
  - a. SETUP.EXE or an .MSI file: a standard Windows Setup application to install your game on a Windows PC.
  - b. CCGAME file: an XNA set up application configured to deploy on a local Windows PC (and NOT configured to deploy to an Xbox 360 Console).
  - c. ZIP file: this ZIP file must contain your games application and all dependencies required to play your game. Judges will extract your game to a local folder on a Windows PC and run the game from that folder.
  - d. XAP file: A Windows Phone setup file for deployment to phone devices.
2. The game must be no more than 300MB. No source code is permitted and games will be disqualified if they are submitted as development projects.
3. The game must be comprised of at least one (1) playable level, however more than one is permissible and they do not need to be sequential levels. The playable portion of the game submitted must illustrate the game play and features of the final Game that your team would like to develop.
4. The Game Prototype must represent the conceptual art direction of the game you are developing, but final graphics are not required.

5. If your game includes and/or requires Kinect support you must include this as a requirement in the Game Play Instructions document.
6. If your game includes and/or requires touchpanel/slate capabilities, you must include this as a requirement in the Game Play Instructions document.
7. If your game requires internet access, you must include this as a requirement in the Game Play Instructions.
8. The installation process of your game must not require the internet to complete successfully, if you use ClickOnce you must ensure it includes your entire game and does not attempt to retrieve components from online.
9. It is acceptable to support multiple languages in your game as long as English is one of the represented languages.
10. The content of the game must be equivalent to an Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rating of "T" for Teen or lower (i.e. Mature games that would be rated above "T" for Teen will be disqualified and will be ineligible to continue in the competition). You can read the ESRB's rating guidelines on their site at <http://www.esrb.org>.

### **Game Play Instructions**

The Game Play Instructions document is an electronic document that informs the judges and prospective players how to setup and play your Game.

#### **The Game Play Instructions must meet the following requirements:**

1. The instructions must be submitted as either a document in .DOC, .DOCX, .PDF, .PPT, or .TXT file formats or a graphic image as a .JPG file.
2. It must be submitted in English.

### **Game Trailer**

The Game Trailer is a video that can serve to advertise your game on the Imagine Cup website to showcase your entry and must meet the following requirements:

1. The video must not exceed thirty seconds in duration.
2. The file must not exceed 50MB in size.
3. The video must be in .WMV or .MP4 format.

### **Live Presentation**

The Live Presentation is a brief PowerPoint overview accompanied by a live stage demonstration of your game. The Live Presentation must meet the following criteria as well as any other criteria set forth by your Local Country/Regional competition and/or the Worldwide Finals:

1. You are responsible for arriving with your software installed on suitable hardware for the demonstration.
2. Your presentation must clearly address each of the **Judging Criteria** outlined above.

3. The accompanying PowerPoint must be in the English language and you must conduct your presentation in English. If a translator is needed, you are responsible for procuring one.
4. The application you demonstrate must be fully functional and implemented.
5. You can use your time any way you wish but you're strongly encouraged to devote as much of your time as possible to the application demonstration.
6. Any or all of your team members may participate in the presentation, but all are not required to participate. It's permissible for a single team member to deliver the presentation.
7. At the end of your presentation, the judges will have an opportunity to ask you questions.