

Regional Rules

ICPC Regional Rules for Regionals 2023/24

*that advance teams to ICPC World Finals 2024 – Draft 20
June 2023*

Registration

If a team wishes to be able to qualify for the ICPC World Finals, then before competing in ANY regional qualifying contest, the coach and all team members must be fully registered in the ICPC Registration System. A qualifying contest is one that allows teams to be promoted to a higher level and which is supervised by faculty. An online contest which is unsupervised may not be classified as a qualifying contest. Registration may not be done retrospectively. Incomplete registration or circumvention that leads to incomplete or false data is grounds for immediate disqualification.

Mission

The ICPC, the “International Collegiate Programming Contest”, is an extra-curricular, competitive programming sport for the universities of the world. ICPC competitions provide gifted students with opportunities to interact, demonstrate, and improve their teamwork, programming, and problem-solving prowess. The ICPC is a global platform for academia, industry, and community to shine the spotlight on and raise the aspirations of the next generation of computing professionals as they pursue excellence.

Introduction

The contest is a multi-tiered team competition for students enrolled in degree granting institutions of higher education. The tiers range from local contests conducted by universities to the highest-level Regional Contest, conducted or hosted by universities from which teams advance to the ICPC World Finals. Teams have the right to advance only for qualifying contests. The hierarchy of qualifying regional contests is shown in the ICPC Registration System. At any level, teams may be invited to advance to the next level using wildcards in harmony with the ICPC Goals, to serve the most students, from the most universities, from the most geographical locations, with equitable access to the World Finals.

Historically, the ICPC World Finals is hosted by one or more universities that conduct the event between April and June. However, due to the pandemic and establishing Region Championships, the ICPC World Finals 2024 is targeted for the first half of the last quarter of 2024. The date of the ICPC World Finals will be published no later than three months before the date of the ICPC World Finals and no earlier than the ICPC World Finals 2023. Future World Finals will likely be scheduled earlier in the year, but by no more than 2 months earlier per year.

Organization

The ICPC is organized according to the ICPC Policies and Procedures. The Executive Committee, chaired by the Executive Director, sets the policy and general rules for the conduct of the contest. The Executive Director is solely responsible for interpreting the rules and for ruling on unforeseen situations. The ICPC Executive Director is an officer of the ICPC Foundation.

The ICPC operates under the auspices of the ICPC Foundation. The ICPC Foundation is responsible for sponsorship, fundraising, host agreements, alumni outreach, IP, and operational matters in compliance with the ICPC Policies and Procedures and ICPC Code of Ethics and Overview, within the Constitution and By-Laws of the ICPC Foundation. Globally, oversight varies in accordance with prevailing laws and in harmony with the principle of locality.

The ICPC International Steering Committee is responsible for establishing regional contest rules, policies and guidelines. They oversee the conduct of financially-autonomous regional contests, resolve regional appeals, rule on international issues, recommend ways to make the contest more accessible and attractive to international participants and review variances in regional rules. There are two standing subcommittees, the Appeals Committee, and the Eligibility Committee.

All ICPC Regional Contests are organized in accordance with the ICPC Policies and Procedures. Each Regional Contest Director (RCD) is charged with executing specific regional contests by these ICPC Regional Rules, the ICPC Policies & Procedures, the ICPC Code of Ethics and Overview and ICPC guidelines.

Each regional contest has the opportunity to vary the rules to accommodate differences in educational systems and host computing facilities. Such rules do not supersede the ICPC Regional Rules or the ICPC World Finals Rules. These contest-specific Rules and other helpful information must be posted on the regional website.

Localization

The language of the Contest is English. All written contest materials will be in English. Additional languages may be used in regional contests. Where an English term may have multiple interpretations, these must be defined to ensure all contestants have clarity of meaning.

Team Composition

All team members must be enrolled in the same degree-granting institution of higher education, herein called the “team institution.” A contact at the team institution, typically a faculty member, must be designated and registered as the “team coach”. The team coach must certify the eligibility of contestants and be the official point-of-contact with the team before and during contest activities. A team may only have one registered coach, and that coach cannot also be a contestant.

The team coach must fully register teams in the ICPC Registration System within the time set by the regional rules which, for all qualifying Regional Contests, is no later than 7 days before the contest. A team is not eligible to compete in the regional contest until the regional contest director has accepted the team in the web registration system. Teams failing to comply with any of these requirements will be ruled ineligible to compete. Only registered reserves may be substituted for contestants. Such substitutions must be entered in the ICPC Registration System by the regional contest director before the contest begins. A reserve can only be substituted for a contestant before the first qualifying contest. Each team consists of three contestants who are eligible to compete in the ICPC World Finals as described under Advancing to the ICPC World Finals in the Regional Rules. The team's contestants must satisfy all eligibility requirements. For more complex decisions, the [Eligibility Decision Tree](#) can be used.

Basic Eligibility Requirements

An eligible student must be willing and able to compete in the ICPC World Finals. In particular, a student who requires a visa to study at the team's institution must be able to gain a visa to travel to the ICPC World Finals plus be able to return to the team institution's location after the Finals. A student must be enrolled in a degree program at the team institution with at least a half-time load. This rule is not to be construed as disqualifying co-op students, exchange students, students serving internships, or extramural students.

Limits on Participation: Disruption in enrollment caused by epidemics is normally waived.

1. A student may compete only on teams with the same team institution during a contest year.
2. A student who has competed in two ICPC World Finals is NOT eligible to compete in ICPC Regionals with the following exceptions:
 - a. ICPC World Finals Moscow (Oct 2021) participation is NOT counted towards the max participation in two ICPC World Finals. This exception will be removed for regional year 2025/26; and
 - b. A student promoted to compete in ICPC World Finals 2023 for either of the World Championships conducted in Sharm during November 2023 will be counted as having participated in one World Finals towards the max participation in two World Finals.

3. A student who has competed in qualifying regional contests during five different contest years is NOT eligible to compete with the following exceptions:

- a. Regional participation in 2020/21 is not counted towards the maximum of 5 different contest years. This exception will be removed for regional year 2025/26; and
- b. Regional participation in ICPC Regionals 2021/22 and ICPC Regionals 2022/23 counts as only one year of regional competition. This exception will be removed from the regional year 2025/26..

Period of Eligibility

A student who meets the Basic Requirements and FIRST began post-secondary studies in 2019 or later is eligible to compete. A student who meets the Basic Requirements and was born in 2000 or later is eligible to compete. The eligibility status for the regional year 2023/24 is determined as of the date of the first qualifying contest or 1 October 2023, whichever best favors student eligibility.

Extending the Period of Eligibility

A coach may petition the [ICPC Eligibility Committee](#) at least three weeks before the regional contest, to extend the Period of Eligibility for a student whose full-time studies have been interrupted or extended. (This includes military or civilian service, illness, epidemics, any work, other studies, or personal reasons). The coach must demonstrate that such an extension would not provide an unfair advantage to the team.

A petition will normally be approved if the student meets the Basic Eligibility Requirements and has not completed more than the equivalent of eight semesters of full-time STEM study as of the date of the first qualifying contest or 1 October 2023, whichever best favors student eligibility. The ICPC Eligibility Committee will render a decision within five days of receiving the petition.

Where to Compete

Contests are partitioned geographically into “ICPC Regions”, and every degree-granting team institution is assigned a home ICPC Region, which determines the only advancement path available for all teams having the same team institution.

Team coaches may request to move all teams with a given team institution to a different home ICPC Region for a given year for a valid reason. The team coaches from that institution must submit such a unanimous request to the Director of Regional Contests (DRC), who will approve the request only if the decision is unanimous among all affected Directors.

Guest Team Participation

An RCD director may invite guest teams who are not eligible to advance toward the World Finals, to compete in a regional contest. An eligible student may compete on a guest team in at most one additional regional contest per year. Guest teams must be registered as such before conducting the contest.

Regional Contest Attendance

All team members must attend all contest activities as specified by the regional contest director for that region. The coach is expected to attend or be available by phone or similar during contest activities.

Failure to attend any of the designated contest events will result in automatic disqualification and forfeiture of any scholarships and prizes.

Conduct of a Regional Contest

Solutions to problems submitted for judging are called runs. Each run is judged as accepted or rejected, and the team is notified of the results.

Public notification of accepted runs may be suspended at an appropriate time (typically during the last hour of the contest) to keep the final results secret. A general announcement to that effect will be made during the contest. Notification of rejected runs will continue to be made to the team until the end of the contest.

A contestant may submit a claim of ambiguity or error in a problem statement by submitting a clarification request. If the judges agree that an ambiguity or error exists, a clarification will be issued to all contestants.

Contestants are not to converse with anyone except members of their team and personnel designated by the regional contest director. Systems support staff may advise contestants on system-related problems such as explaining system error messages.

While the contest is scheduled for a particular time length (typically five hours), the regional contest director has the authority to alter the length of the contest in the event of unforeseen difficulties. Should the contest duration be altered, every attempt will be made to notify contestants in a timely and uniform manner.

A team may be disqualified by the regional contest director for any activity that jeopardizes the contest such as dislodging extension cords, unauthorized modification of contest materials, any activity that may knowingly or unknowingly adversely impact another team or distracting behavior.

At least six problems will be posted. So far as possible, problems will avoid dependence on detailed knowledge of a particular application area or particular contest language.

Scoring of a Regional Contest

A problem is solved when it is accepted by the judges. The judges are solely responsible for accepting or rejecting submitted runs. In consultation with the judges, the Regional Contest Director determines the winners of the regional contest. The regional contest director and judges are empowered to adjust for or adjudicate unforeseen events and conditions. Their decisions are final.

Teams are ranked according to the most problems solved. For awards, or in determining qualifier(s) for the ICPC World Finals, teams who solve the same number of problems are ranked by least total time, and if need be by the earliest time of submission of the last accepted run. The total time is the sum of the time consumed for each problem solved. The time consumed for a solved problem is the time elapsed from the beginning of the contest to the submission of the first accepted run plus 20 penalty minutes for every previously rejected run for that problem that was not rejected due to Compilation Error. There is no time consumed for a problem that is not solved.

Regional Championships

The regional contests are partitioned into eight championships; the ICPC Africa & Arab Championship, the ICPC Asia East Championship, the ICPC Asia Pacific Championship, the ICPC Asia West Championship, the ICPC European Championship, the ICPC Latin America Championship, the ICPC Northern Eurasia Championship, and the ICPC North America Championship. Additional Championships may be defined by the ICPC Executive Committee.

The highest level Regional Contest may be a Championship Contest. Team composition and requirements rules for a Championship contest are to be the same as for the World Finals. A Championship contest should be held no later than three months prior to the World Finals.

Note: The 2023/24 Regional Schedule may extend into the first quarter of 2024.

Regional Contest Computing Environment

The programming languages of the regional contest will include C and C++. Additional programming languages may be used. The programming languages of the ICPC World Finals are Java, Kotlin, Python and C/C++.

Each team will use a single workstation. The regional contest director is responsible for determining that teams have reasonably equivalent computing resources.

Each Regional Contest Director determines whether contestants may bring materials for use during the contest. Please see the specific regional rules at the ICPC Regional Contest Web Site.

At the ICPC World Finals, no printed materials or electronic devices may be brought into the contest area. On-line reference materials will be made available as described in the [Programming Environment Web Site](#). Each team will be permitted to provide a PDF of up to 25 pages of notes within the limits described during Team Certification. Three copies will be printed and placed at the team's workstation for use during the ICPC World Finals.

Complaints, Appeals, and Remedies

If irregularities or misconduct are observed during the contest, team members or coaches should bring them to the attention of the contest officials so that action may be taken as soon as possible. After the conclusion of the contest and the results have been made public, coaches may file complaints or appeals as follows:

Within 1 day: The coach may file a complaint by sending an email containing a text message with no enclosures to

`manager@icpc.global`

The Contest Manager will forward the complaint to the Regional Contest Director, supervising Regional Contest Directors, and the Director of Regional Contests, copying the coach.

Within 2 more days: The RCD shall respond to the complaint.

Within 1 more day: The coach may file an appeal by sending email to the Contest Manager who will forward the appeal to the Appeals Committee copying the coach, RCD and supervising RCDs.

Within 2 more days: The Appeals Committee will investigate the circumstances of the appeal and notify the coach, RCD and the supervising RCDs.

This process is governed as follows:

The results of the regional contest are not final until the complaints and appeals process has run its course. Only coaches may file complaints and appeals. An appeal must be based on one or more of the following circumstances: violations of the Rules, misconduct by teams, or gross misconduct by contest officials with the intent to harm. The decisions of the judges are final.

Specifically, a decision on a problem submission MAY NOT be appealed. The Appeals Committee overturns decisions only under extraordinary circumstances. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final. No additional World Finals invitations will be given to remedy a complaint. All complaints will be acknowledged.

The appeal will be automatically rejected if the above procedure is not followed.

Advancing to the ICPC World Finals

The highest level Regional Contests advance teams to the ICPC World Finals. Additional teams who competed in the highest level of regional contests may be invited to the ICPC World Finals as wild card teams.

Teams qualify to advance to the ICPC World Finals through Regional Contests and by satisfying all rules posted in The Rules of the ICPC World Finals. Specifically:

To qualify for the ICPC World Finals, the coach and all team members must be fully registered in the ICPC Registration System BEFORE competing in ANY regional qualifying event. Incomplete registration or circumvention that leads to incomplete or false data is grounds for immediate disqualification.

Only one team from a given institution may advance to the ICPC World Finals. No team member on the qualifying team may have competed as a contestant in two previous ICPC World Finals.

The coach of a qualifying team is the point-of-contact before and during ICPC World Finals activities. The coach must complete certification at the Team Certification Web Site within five (5) days of notification. Qualifying teams will be invited by email within one day of completing certification.

Qualifying teams requiring visas must initiate the process of applying for visas within ten days of being issued an invitation. Teams failing to comply with any of these requirements will be ruled ineligible to compete in the ICPC World Finals. Upon completion of these requirements, a qualifying team will be advanced to the ICPC World Finals.

A team advancing to the ICPC World Finals will be comprised of the same three members as when it qualified. If a team member is unwilling, unable or unfit to compete in the ICPC World Finals, the coach must notify the ICPC Manager promptly. A team member who is unwilling or unfit to compete in the ICPC World Finals will be disqualified from further ICPC competitions. The team member may appeal disqualification to the Appeals Committee. At on-site registration, participants must provide a picture ID (passport, drivers license, etc). Contestants must show proof of enrollment at the university during the term of the regional contest at which they qualified. A letter on university stationery with the signature of a university official accompanied by an English translation is sufficient.

