

# INTERNATIONAL COSPLAY LEAGUE (ICL) – RULEBOOK 2025

General rules applied to duo and solo categories.



## GENERAL RULES

1. All the contestants must be over 18 years old by the 10th of September of 2025 and must have the selected country nationality or permanent residence.
2. A cosplayer that has represented a different country in the past in a different international selection or competition can not represent a new country until 5 years have passed since the last representation. As an example, a cosplayer with French nationality and Italian permanent residence that has represented France in WCS 2022 can not represent Italy in ICL until 2027.
3. Once a country is represented in ICL by a cosplayer, the same cosplayer can not represent a different country. It does not matter if the cosplayer has represented a different country in a different competition, every cosplayer has to choose one country to represent in ICL and that country won't change during the years the competition exists.
4. All the contestants must be ready for the costumes' prejudging. The order of pre- judging will be chosen before the convention and a list will be given to the contestants. The contestant must be ready 30 minutes before their turn. The participants must respect the order and will not be evaluated before their turn or after.
5. Cosplays must proceed from an official commercial source and must have an official reference picture with a full design (Comic, Manga, Books, Cartoons, Anime, Movies, TV-movies, Musicals, Video Games), meaning that the design cannot be based on fan art. Flesh and bone characters will be allowed if they are from official works of fiction or from biopics. The only non-official designs allowed are the Sakizô and Hannah Alexander illustrations. No genderswap or gijinka will be allowed from any source unless the design is official. Designs represented in merchandising (posters, dolls, artbooks...) are allowed if the original source is listed in this rule and the design is officially approved and commercialized by the original source.
6. Customizable characters are not allowed. Characters must have an official design and the cosplayer must adapt to the official design. If a cosplayer wants

to represent a customizable character, the official design provided by the official media must be portrayed.

7. Cosplayers must be able to provide an official reference image of the character where all the parts of the design are visible. Collages are allowed if it is proven that all the images belong to the same design. Exceptions may be applied in the duo category if it's required for the storyline of the performance and if it's approved by ICL. **References for the preliminary event at aniMUC 2025 must be submitted as one (1) single PDF file. Other file formats or multiple files will not be accepted!**
8. Costumes that have previously won international qualifying rounds or awards in international competitions such as WCS, CWM, ECG, MICM, PGEC, GICOF, E2C... can't enter the competition. If the cosplayer has been selected as a runner-up, the costume is allowed to compete in the ICL selections, but the performance has to be altered. **Costumes that have been entered into the preliminary event at aniMUC 2025 can't be entered into any other cosplay competition at aniMUC 2025.**
9. Once the cosplayer is selected, the costumes that will be chosen and presented in the finals of ICL can not be used for any other competition before the finals occur. The costumes can be posted online and worn, and are not required to be kept confidential. Work in progress and finished costume media is allowed to be uploaded to social media.
10. It is allowed to use the same costume in the finals than in the national preliminary round if the costume fits the rules but in case of a tie the jury will value the creation of a new costume for the competition in a more positive way.
11. ICL is to take place on stage: if the costume is not suitable size and/or is unable to go on stage, you can't take part in the competition and will be disqualified.
12. It is forbidden to jump off the stage closer to the public and/or the jury; violating cosplayers will be disqualified.
13. It is absolutely forbidden to finish the costumes or stage props during the activities in Spain or during the convention, if any staff member notices this rule being broken it will be communicated and the craftsmanship points will be removed. It is allowed to fix any broken part, but the costume must be finished.
14. Effects of fire, sparks and smoke are forbidden, as well as crackers with gunpowder and laser lights. Objects cannot be thrown on the stage, it is forbidden to dirty, mark or damage the stage. It is also forbidden to bring any liquid, animals or glass on stage.
15. It is absolutely prohibited to use real weapons. Imitations of firearms should contain the special "red cap". **For attending the preliminary event at aniMUC 2025 the rules and regulations set in place by aniMUC apply.**
16. It is forbidden to wear offensive make-up or costumes, remember this is an international cosplay competition with different cultures taking part.

17. The cosplayers must follow the indications given by the organization, any misconduct before or after the competition may cause the disqualification of the contestant and the prohibition of entering ICL again.
18. Previous organizers of ICL selections are not allowed to enter the competition. Cosplayers that are going to organize ICL in the future are not allowed to enter the competition. Exceptions may be applied if approved by ICL.
19. Cosplayers that have been selected for the 2025 finals are not allowed to judge selections in other countries or online for the 2025 finals.
20. Japan Weekend and ICL will be allowed to make free use of the photographs and videos taken during the contest without any economical compensation for the participants or photographers. These pictures will be given to third parties to promote the competition.
21. The rules can go through any type of modifications until the day of the contest according to the needs of the organization. The participation in the contest implies the recognition of these rules.

## JURY

1. The jury is not allowed to follow the process of the creation of costumes in social media. In case it happens, the jury will not be allowed to take this information into account when judging, only what's presented by the contestant in the pre-judging or in the dossier.
2. We will require an online dossier before September 1st, a template will be given to the contestants at least two weeks before the deadline. The costumes for the finals must be finished by September 1st to be able to fill the dossier. Any delay will result in points deducted from the craftsmanship category.
3. The jury will not debate on the contest or on the participants before or after the contest. In case a participant approaches a member of the jury, the organization will be informed and will take necessary measures. If a participant needs advice on the future contest, it will be given without considering the current one: the judges can't talk about the deliberation with the cosplayer, but they can give advice for future competitions.
4. Once announced, the decision of the jury will be irrevocable. (Should any misconduct of the winners come to light after the competition, the decision will not be revoked, but the affected participants will be irrevocably excluded from the ICL in the future.)

## CRAFTSMANSHIP

1. The quality of the costume will be evaluated in general, that is, some parts cannot be of higher quality than others – this will lower the final grade. Parts will not be judged separately.

2. The diversity of methods and materials will be valued, as long as they provide a better result. The jury will not take into account personal experiences or how big of a challenge it was for the participant, the result is more important.
3. Patterning must be done by the contestant. It is allowed to modify existing patterns but commissioned or store-bought patterns with no significant modifications or adaptations will deduct points from the craftsmanship score.
4. Manual sewing or embroidery will not be valued positively if the result is worse than what it could be with a machine. If the part of the costume created with advanced techniques and the manual ones have the same quality, the one which took the most effort will be valued.
5. Using an embroidery machine is allowed only if the embroidery files are designed by the contestant. Using a 3D printer is allowed only if the 3D model is designed by the contestant.
6. It is allowed to use commissioned or store-bought patterns, embroidery files or 3D files if in total all the pieces not designed by the contestant are a 10% or less of the total costume for solos and a 20% or less of the total of the costume for duos.
7. The costume has to be handmade by the contestant, only a 10% (solos) or 20% (duos) can be prefabricated, but modified, and what is stated in the rule number 6 of craftsmanship would be included in this percentage.
8. The choice of materials accurate for the characters' time period will be valued positively. For example, if the cosplay is from the Middle ages, an accurate choice of fabric will give you more points. If you choose a fabric which is very different aesthetically, you will lose points.
9. The cosplay will be compared to the reference picture, but the jury will not take into consideration the physical appearance of the participant.
10. Make-up and wig styling will be taken into consideration and have to be done by the contestant.
11. To avoid future surprises, have in mind that a simple cosplay with a neat craftsmanship will have a higher grade than a massive costume with bad craftsmanship.

## **RULES APPLIED EXCLUSIVELY TO SOLO CATEGORY**

1. Cosplays will only be judged for their craftsmanship quality and the resemblance to the reference image. Acting will not be considered, but it is recommended to act to achieve better footage.
2. Cosplayers will walk down the catwalk alone, without any help, it is an individual category. During the catwalk the cosplayers must pose in different ways showcasing the costume.
3. The contestants will have a minimum of 30 seconds and a maximum of 60 seconds on the catwalk, and the music will be chosen by ICL. Contestants cannot bring their own music, nor can they speak or sing during the catwalk. No microphones will be provided. **During the preliminary event at aniMUC 2025**

participants will have a maximum of 30 seconds on stage. The aniMUC contest organizers suggest that participants come up with 3 different posing variants to be used during the catwalk.

4. An interview with the contestant will be made while the duo prepares their stage props. There will be no interview portion on stage during the preliminary event at aniMUC 2025.
5. Costume change during the catwalk is not allowed, one costume per contestant.

## RULES APPLIED EXCLUSIVELY TO DUO CATEGORY

1. Each spot must be occupied by two cosplayers wearing costumes from the same source, as an example if the couple is cosplaying the movie saga HTTYD it's not allowed to cosplay from HTTYD 1 and HTTYD 2, the costumes must be from the same movie. The same rule is applied for costume changing during the performance unless it makes sense for the story development, and that would have to be approved by ICL.
2. If the cosplay is based on merchandising, both costumes must proceed from the same collection or design base unless it doesn't have a design for the chosen character. Cosplayers must then search a different design based on the same merchandise or cosplay the original source as it is. A cosplayer can not cosplay an original source while their partner is cosplaying a merchandise source.
3. Stage props, in case there are any, don't have to be pre-judged, as it's part of the performance score, but have to be 50% made by the contestants. If any help with any part of the stage props has been provided, it has to be said for it to be ranked correspondingly. In case it's hidden and later revealed, the contestants will be immediately disqualified, and this offense will be considered for the future contests.
4. Cosplayers from the same duo can help each other with the making of the costumes. Both cosplayers must work in at least 50% of one of the costumes, meaning that one cosplayer can't make all the pieces for both of them. As an example, one cosplayer can make half their costume and the other cosplayer can make their costume and half the other costume, or one cosplayer can make the armor parts and the other cosplayer the sewing parts. Both cosplayers must work together and participate in the creation of the costumes.

## PERFORMANCE AND ACTING

1. 40% of the grading will be given for the cosplayers' costumes and resemblance with the source, and 60% for the performance, acting and staging.
2. The performance cannot last less than 1:30 minutes or more than 3:00 minutes without any exception.

3. The originality of the show and acting will be highly rated, as well as the body and facial expression:
  - a. When representing a scene that appears directly in the original source as it is performed, the originality will be lowly scored. Adaptations can be applied even if it's not true to the original source to gain originality in the performance score.
  - b. Body and face expression is an important aspect of the performance. Unless it's because the character lacks any, not having body or facial expression will be lowly scored.
4. Cosplayers can't leave the stage alone for more than 15 seconds at once. The video will be complementary but won't be a primary interaction for the performance. If an introduction has to be made with the video without any cosplayer on stage, it can't last more than 15 seconds as stated before.
5. Cosplayers must be on stage 80% of the duration of the performance. As an example if the performance lasts 180 seconds (3 minutes), cosplayers must be on stage 144 seconds, together or individually.
6. Both cosplayers must be together on stage at least 50% of the performance. Exceptions may be applied if approved by ICL.
7. Stage props can't block the jury's vision of the performance. Cosplayers must take into account if the screen is going to be blocked by stage props, it won't deduct points from the performance score unless it's visibly unaesthetic or badly planned, as cosplayers will receive prior to the delivery of the media a map of the stage and screen, including measurements. [Details regarding screen measurements as well as video format required for the preliminary event at aniMUC 2025 can be found under rule 23.](#)
8. Cosplayers must not give their back to the audience unless it's required for the storyline.
9. Cosplayers must not leave the stage until their part in the performance has finished. Leaving the stage is permanent.
10. The participant must direct the performance on their own and without any external creative input.
11. No microphones will be provided; the performance has to be prepared beforehand.
12. When it comes to cosplays of idols or of similar thematic (Love Live, Vocaloid, AKB0048...), the performance must contain something apart from dancing choreography or singing. If it occurs, dancing or lip-syncing cannot last for more than 30 seconds. Playbacks of general songs are allowed. As an example, a group of Love Live cannot dance and lip-sync during all the performance, but a cosplayer of Ursula from Little Mermaid can perform her song while she is acting.
13. Erotic or pornographic scenes are forbidden, as well as any immoral acts unnatural for the character which could disrupt the order of the contest or disturb the audience.

14. If there are dialogues in the performance, contestants must provide a clean recording without noise, as the quality of such can deduct points for the performance. Only English or Spanish will be allowed for the finals and subtitles will be placed by ICL on screen. The only exception would be songs that are performed in a different language and can not be translated. **For the preliminary event at aniMUC 2025 it is required that performances containing dialog are recorded in the english language to ensure the best possible comprehension for the Jury.**
15. It is allowed to use music, videos or dialogues from the original source.
16. If the pronunciation of English or Spanish is not understandable, dialogues can't be used. Hiring or collaborating with external voice actors is allowed, only when the dialogue is written or chosen by the contestants.
17. Costume change is allowed: it must be from the same source, but the character can be different. Basing the performance solely on costume changes that don't follow the storyline will have a penalty in the performance score.
18. Only the pair of competitors can participate in the performance. Any helper must leave the stage before the start of the performance.
19. The preparation of the stage props can't last more than 40 seconds. The performance will automatically start after the hosts finishes the interview with the solo and the intro for the duo is played. **Due to the exclusion of the interview portion in the solo category during the preliminary event at aniMUC 2025 (Solo Category Rules 4.), the performance start will be determined by the aniMUC contest organizer.**
20. Stage props can't be taller than two meters individually and longer than four meters in total. If different stage props are used the width can't be bigger than half of the stage (not counting the catwalk). **Stage props can't be placed in the stairs, and only small stage props can be placed in the catwalk. Stage props used during the preliminary event at aniMUC 2025 are required to be easy to carry, as they will need to be carried over steps and stairs as well as passing through standard sized doors. Since backstage space is very limited, prop can not be stored at any time previous to the event. Please consider these limitations in your planning!**
21. Cosplayers can use one to three big stage props that will be placed by the staff and one to three small stage props that can be placed by the contestant. Each big stage prop can't weigh more than 10kg, each small stage prop can't weigh more than 3kg.
22. If the measures or weights are surpassed, the performance score will be 0.
23. A video will be mandatory, the video could be an image or a well-produced video but the cosplayers must show something on screen to make the performance more visible. We don't recommend using white images the most part of the time since backlighting will occur and your performance won't be visible from the streaming. Excessively flashy videos are forbidden. **Any video for the preliminary event at aniMUC 2025 must be sent in as MP4 and the file needs to**



be compressed to 720p or 1080p to ensure the best possible quality shown on screen. Other formats will not be accepted! The measurements of the video screen is 650 x 370 cm.

## RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CONTESTANTS

1. Cosplayers must be able to communicate with the ICL staff in English or Spanish. If cosplayers can't communicate with the staff, they must require assistance from their local organizer to understand the rulebook, deadlines and more. Not speaking the language won't be an excuse to not fulfill the obligations of the contestants.
2. The contestant must participate in the International Cosplay League finals in Japan Weekend Madrid. If the contestant cancels the participation because of any reason the contestant must indemnify the organization in charge of the flights for the cost of the flights.
3. The contestant must participate in all the activities organized by Japan Weekend, before and after the competition. The following of the schedule will be mandatory. If the contestant isn't present from September 18th to September 21st a compensation will be made to the organization of Japan Weekend, to cover any loss of booked activities.
4. The contestant is obliged to give up all image rights without any kind of compensation for commercial and promotion use of Japan Weekend and International Cosplay League.
5. The contestant will be added to a contestants group where all the information will be posted.
6. The contestant must respect the deadlines provided by ICL, any delay will remove points from either the costume or performance score, depending on the document delayed.
7. If the contestant misconducts at any moment in the convention, before, after or online, the contestant will be disqualified and the future participation in International Cosplay League will be forbidden. It will also be communicated to the organization of the previous qualification in the country of origin.
8. The contestant isn't allowed to give any details or documents about the internal organization of Japan Weekend or International Cosplay League. The contestant will be allowed to give information about the activities, schedule and competition in an informative way without disclosing confidential information or documents.
9. The contestants selected or attending the finals of ICL 2025 aren't allowed to enter ICL 2026 selections in the same category. If the contestant is selected to represent their country for two years in any category, the contestant won't be allowed to enter the competition in three years from the last winning. As an example, if a cosplayer won the selections in 2018 and the last win was in 2022, the contestant won't be allowed to enter 2023, 2024 or 2025. If the contestant wins the finals, a waiting period of five years will be applied for the same



category, and a waiting period of three years will be applied to enter a different category. If a cosplayer wins a second or a third prize during the finals, the cosplayer must wait one year to enter the selections again, no matter the category.

10. For the ICL finals the expenses covered are: a round-trip ticket from the city of origin to Madrid with at least one checked-in luggage per person, hotel from Thursday to Sunday, dinner on Thursday, three meals on Friday and Saturday, breakfast and lunch on Sunday, transportation during the activities of ICL, and a convention, backstage and green room pass.
11. Helpers/handlers are allowed and will receive a convention, backstage and green room pass. Lunch will be provided to the helper during Saturday and Sunday. Helpers are allowed to join some of the activities at their own expense, ICL will provide more information to the contestants once the finals approach. Participants' helpers can stay in the same hotel room at no additional charge.
12. Contestants and helpers won't be allowed to act on behalf of any organization or company during the activities.
13. Organizers from the country of origin won't be allowed in any ICL activity or planned meal unless they're the helpers of the contestants, but will be given a pass for the convention. Only the contestant can authorize who their helper is, ICL won't interfere with a contestant's wishes.
14. Cosplayers and helpers must return to their country, any illegal activity will be communicated to the police forces.

## ONLINE SELECTIONS

1. The rules previously written will be applied for the online selections, as the costume that will be presented is the same one that will be used for the finals.
2. Only cosplayers that don't have ICL selections in the country or region they're representing will be allowed to enter the online selections.
3. Cosplayers that have previously won online selections will have a waiting period of one year since the last representation, even if they want to join a different category.
4. Cosplayers that were not selected in past online selections are allowed to enter the same costume.
5. Costume must be finished in at least 70% in the submission, it must be wearable.
6. In the submission, ICL will require through a Drive link that will be sent through the official form:
  - a. Passport, ID picture or permanent residence picture of the country that is going to be represented. Only the name, surname and location has to be visible. Deadnames can be censored during submission but will be required to book the flights. Personal information will never be disclosed publicly and the pass will have the chosen name of the cosplayer and surnames.
  - b. A PDF with progress pictures of the costume and explanations of the creation. This will be referred to as WIP booklet or dossier.

- c. A non-edited video zooming-in all the details of the costume. Costume must be also worn by the cosplayer and shown on camera. Cosplayer must also move to show how the costume adapts to their body.
  - d. At least 20 images of the costume and its details, including all the parts (wig, props, shoes, jewelry...).
  - e. Images of the finished costume worn by the cosplayer. The make-up is not required unless it's an important part of the design.
  - f. Duos: Video of the performance. Cosplayers must record themselves cleanly to represent the skit that would be portrayed during the finals. The background video and audio must be also presented, but we will allow modifications for the finals. Cosplayers that already represented one performance in a different convention are allowed to enter with a video recording of that performance, but a new video will be also required that fully adapts to the ICL rules. ICL wants to get an idea of what would be represented in the finals, no major changes will be allowed after the selection.
7. Not submitting all the files required will result in not being able to be selected for the online selections.
  8. We will select one solo and one duo. A second solo and duo may be selected depending on the space left for ICL 2025. Both members of the duo must represent the same country.
  9. Solos and duos don't have to be from the same country, meaning we can as an example select a solo from Brazil and a duo from Peru.
  10. Online selections will open on May 5th and close on May 9th.

*The verification of this rulebook is still pending and will be revised by aniMUC once verified through official sources.*