

ICPC Regional Rules for 2011

Updated 25 October 2011 by James Comer

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Mission

The ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC) provides college students with opportunities to interact with students from other universities and to sharpen and demonstrate their problem-solving, programming, and teamwork skills. The contest provides a platform for ACM, industry, and academia to encourage and focus public attention on the next generation of computing professionals as they pursue excellence.

Introduction

The contest is a two-tiered competition among teams of students representing institutions of higher education. Teams first compete in regional contests held around the world from September to November each year. The winning team from each regional contest qualifies to advance to the ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest World Finals, typically held the following March to mid-April. Additional high-ranking teams may be invited to the World Finals as wild card teams.

Organization

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

The ICPC is organized according to the [ICPC Policies and Procedures](#). For each regional contest, the Regional Contest Director (RCD) is charged with executing a regional contest in accordance with the regional rules and ICPC policies, procedures, and guidelines. Regional rules may vary to accommodate differences in educational systems and host computing facilities. Additional rules, exceptions, and other information pertaining to a specific regional contest can be found at the Regionals Contest Website. Those rules do not supersede these rules or the World Finals rules.

Localization

The language of the Contest is English. All written contest materials will be in English. Additional languages may be used in regional contests. Terms which have undefined or different meanings outside the United States must be defined or redefined appropriately in that region's Region-Specific Rules. Rules may vary at the regional level to accommodate these differences.

Team Composition

A representative of the sponsoring institution of higher education, typically a faculty member, must serve as or designate the team coach. The coach certifies the eligibility of contestants and serves as the official point-of-contact with the team prior to and during contest activities. A team may only have one coach and the coach cannot also be a contestant.

The coach must fully register teams in the [ICPC Registration System](#) within the time set by the regional rules which, for all Regional Contests, is no later than the earlier date of 7 days before the contest and November 8. 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.

Each team consists of three contestants who are eligible to compete in the ICPC World Finals as described under Advancing to the World Finals in the Regional Rules. The team's contestants must satisfy the following eligibility rules.

Contestant Eligibility Rules - Please refer to the [Eligibility Decision Tree](#) to more easily determine eligibility.

Basic Requirements

- A student must be willing and able to compete in the World Finals.
- A student must be enrolled in a degree program at the sponsoring institution with at least a half-time load. This rule is not to be construed as disqualifying co-op students, exchange students, or students serving internships.
- A student may compete for only one institution during a contest year.
- A student who has competed in two World Finals is NOT eligible to compete.
- A student who has competed in five Regional Contests is NOT eligible to compete.

Period of Eligibility

- A student who meets the Basic Requirements and FIRST began post-secondary studies in 2007 or later is eligible to compete.
- A student who meets the Basic Requirements and was born in 1988 or later is eligible to compete.

Extending the Period of Eligibility

- A coach may petition the [ICPC Eligibility Committee](#) 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, work/studies, or personal reasons.
- The coach must demonstrate that such an extension would not provide an unfair advantage to the team.
- A petition will be approved routinely if the student meets the Basic Requirements and has not completed more than the equivalent of eight semesters of full-time study as of the date of the regional contest.
- To make such a request, the coach must petition the ICPC Eligibility Committee at least three weeks before the regional contest. The [ICPC Eligibility Committee](#) will render a decision within five days.

Where to Compete

Each team is expected to compete only within its defined region. However, a team with a valid reason (e.g., driving distance) may request to compete in a different region for a given year. The team coach must submit such a request to the [Director of Regional Contests](#) (DRC), who will approve the request only if the decision is unanimous among all affected Directors.

An institution may send contestants to only one regional contest in a given year.

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 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 by a judge, and the team is notified of the results.

Notification of accepted runs may be suspended at an appropriate time to keep the final results secret. A general announcement to that effect will be made during the contest. Notification of rejected runs will continue 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 to a judge. 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, or distracting behavior.

At least six problems will be posed. So far as possible, problems will avoid dependence on detailed knowledge of a particular applications 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 the purposes of awards, or in determining qualifier(s) for the World Finals, teams who solve the same number of problems are ranked by least total time. 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 submittal of the accepted run plus 20 penalty minutes for every rejected run for that problem regardless of submittal time. There is no time consumed for a problem that is not solved.

It is the responsibility of the Regional Contest Director to specify any additional tie-breakers. Tie-breaker policies must be announced to contestants before the contest begins.

Regional Contest Computing Environment

The programming languages of the regional contest will include C/C++. Additional programming languages may be used. The programming languages of the World Finals are Java and C/C++. Prior to the World Finals, the judges will have solved all problems in Java 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 - [Regionals](#). At the 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 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 the [Contest Manager](#). The Contest Manager will forward the complaint to the Regional Contest Director, Super Regional Director, and 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 and RCD.

Within 2 more days

The Appeals Committee will investigate the circumstances of the appeal and notify the coach and RCD of their decision.

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 do 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 finals invitations will be given to remedy to a complaint.
- All complaints will be acknowledged.

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

Advancing to the World Finals

Teams qualify to advance to the World Finals through Regional Contests and by satisfying all rules posted in [The Rules of the ACM-ICPC World Finals](#). Specifically:

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

Only one team from a given institution may advance to the World Finals. Team members will be provided free one-year student memberships in [ACM](#). No team member on the qualifying team may have competed as a contestant in two previous World Finals.

The coach of a qualifying team is the point-of-contact prior to and during World Finals activities. The coach must complete certification at the [Team Certification Web Site](#) within five (5) days of notification. Qualifying teams will be issued an invitation by email and postal mail within one day of completing certification.

Qualifying teams requiring visas must initiate the process of applying for visas within 10 days of being issued an invitation. Teams failing to comply with any of these requirements will be ruled ineligible to compete in the World Finals. Upon completion of these requirements, a qualifying team will be advanced to the World Finals.

A team advancing to the World Finals will be comprised of the same three members as when it qualified. In the event that a team member is unwilling, unable or unfit to compete in the World Finals, the coach must notify the [ICPC Manager](#) in a timely manner. A team member who is unwilling or unfit to compete in the 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 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.