

ICO Regulations

Proposed to the General Assembly, ICO 2026

International Cybersecurity Olympiad

Defined terms *(for reference; not part of the Regulations)*

Member	S2.1	Member Delegation	S2.2
Delegation Leader / Deputy Leader	S2.2	Contestant	S2.3
Observer	S2.5	Guest	S2.6
General Assembly (GA)	S3.1	International Committee (IC)	S3.4
President	S3.9	Secretary / Treasurer	S3.6
International Scientific Committee (ISC)	S3.10	Board of Patrons (BP)	S3.13
Future / Present / Past Host	S4.1–S4.2	Planning Meeting	S4.4
Registration Fee	S4.6	Competition Tasks	S5.1
Contest Rules	S1.3, S3.10, S4.4, S5	ICO'n and ICO'n±k	S1.6
Non-Counting Contestant	S5.4		

Section 1: Preamble, Objectives and Neutrality

S1.1 These Regulations govern the conduct of the International Cybersecurity Olympiad (ICO) and all those involved in it. Where they do not give explicit guidance, those involved are asked to act in their general spirit.

S1.2 The official working language of the ICO is English. Official ICO business — including the **General Assembly**, the competition tasks and these Regulations — is conducted in English. Each **Member** is responsible for its own translation needs.

S1.3 The **Contest Rules** — covering the conduct of the competition and judging — are not part of these Regulations. They are prepared and owned by the **ISC**, and are developed and issued on the timeline set out in S4.4.

S1.4 The main objectives of the ICO are:

- To foster friendly international relationships among young people from every part of the world, building mutual respect and future peace;
- To discover, encourage, bring together, challenge and recognise young people exceptionally talented in cybersecurity;
- To bring the discipline of cybersecurity to the attention of young people;
- To promote the organisation of cybersecurity competitions for secondary-school students.

S1.5 The ICO is founded on the conviction that bringing together young people from every part of the world, to respect and learn from one another, is among the surest ways to build future peace. Accordingly, no **Member** is sanctioned, censured or excluded by the ICO on political grounds.

Proposals to sanction, censure or exclude a **Member** fall outside the competence of the **General Assembly** and the **International Committee** and are not entertained.

S1.6 In these Regulations, ICO'n denotes the edition of the ICO under discussion; ICO'n+k and ICO'n-k denote the editions held k years after and before it. Thus ICO'n-1 is the previous edition and ICO'n+1 the next.

Section 2: Members and Participants

S2.1 A **Member** is a nation, state, region or territory with a distinct identity in the field of cybersecurity, that: (a) has an officially recognised relationship with the United Nations or UNESCO; (b) has participated in the ICO within the last three years; (c) participates in other International Science Olympiads; or (d) is admitted by the **IC**.

S2.2 Each participating **Member** is represented by a **Member Delegation**, all of whose members represent that one **Member**. A Delegation is headed by a **Delegation Leader** and includes one to four **Contestants**; it may also include a **Deputy Leader**, who may act for the Leader in any duty. At least one of the Leader or **Deputy Leader** must have an appropriate scientific background to represent their **Contestants** on technical and task matters; it is strongly recommended that both do.

S2.3 A **Contestant** is a student who: (a) for the majority of 1 September to 31 December in the year before ICO'n was enrolled in education at a level of secondary education or lower (including home schooling) in the **Member** they represent, and was not enrolled in a tertiary degree programme at half-time or greater load; and (b) is not older than twenty years on 1 July of the year of ICO'n. Students studying abroad may instead represent the **Member** of their nationality. Exceptions may be requested through the **IC**.

S2.4 **Contestants** must be selected through a procedure that is based on ability, includes one or more tests of cybersecurity problem-solving, and is open to all eligible students of the **Member**. Entry should be free; where a fee is unavoidable it must be minimal, and it should be waived for any student who would otherwise be unable to take part.

S2.5 An **Observer** is (a) a representative of a **Future Host**; or (b) a representative of a new **Member** that has not previously participated and brings no **Contestants**.

S2.6 A **Guest** is any other person attending the ICO with no official duty. **Guests** attend with the agreement of the **Present Host**.

S2.7 The representatives of the **IC** and the **ISC** are participants in the ICO in their own right, and are not members of a **Member Delegation**.

Section 3: Committees and Office Bearers

The General Assembly

S3.1 The **General Assembly** is the owner of the ICO: a temporary committee meeting during ICO'n. It acts in the general spirit of the Regulations and takes decisions on matters not provided for here; decides on proposals from the **IC**; ratifies **Host** nominations; and elects representatives to the **IC** and **ISC**. The **GA** does not exist during the interval between two consecutive ICOs.

S3.2 Participation in the **GA**:

- Attend: **Delegation Leaders** and **Deputy Leaders**, the representatives of the **IC** and **ISC**, the Chair of the **GA**, and **Observers**; others may attend with the permission of the Chair.

- **Speak**: any person attending may address the **GA** with the permission of the Chair.
- **Propose**: any participating **Member** and the **IC** may bring motions.
- **Vote**: one vote per participating **Member**. Motions pass by a simple majority of the votes cast. A motion to depart from a provision of these Regulations for a single decision, without amending the text, requires a two-thirds majority; permanent amendment of the Regulations is governed by Section 7.

A quorum of half of the participating **Members** must be present for the **GA** to take decisions.

S3.3 The **GA** is chaired by the **President**, the **Secretary**, or another person designated by the **IC**. The Chair does not vote, but casts the deciding vote in the event of a tie. The **GA** meets at least four times during ICO'n: once on each competition day after the contest, and once before and once after the competition days.

The International Committee

S3.4 The **IC** is a long-term standing committee. Its voting representatives are:

- the **President** of the ICO;
- one **Present Host** representative (ICO'n);
- two **Future Host** representatives (ICO'n+1 and ICO'n+2);
- three representatives elected by the **GA**.

One **Past Host** representative (ICO'n-1) and one **Future Host** representative (ICO'n+3) sit without a vote. All representatives of the **IC** are from different **Members**. For this purpose the **President's Member** of nationality is counted, although the **President** represents no **Member Delegation**, so no other **IC** representative may be from that **Member**. No representative of the **IC** may at the same time be a **Delegation Leader**, **Deputy Leader** or **Contestant**.

S3.5 The **IC** acts in the general spirit of the Regulations and has overall responsibility for the management of the ICO between editions, carrying out the decisions and intent of the **General Assembly** and reporting to the next **General Assembly**. Its tasks are to:

- propose revisions of the Regulations to the **GA** under Section 7;
- elaborate on the recommendations of the **GA**;
- vet and prepare prospective **Hosts**, and present **Host** nominations to the **GA** for ratification;
- invite the participants to ICO'n;
- support the **ISC**;
- act as arbitrator in disputes arising before and during the ICO, other than evaluation disputes, which fall to the **ISC** under S5.3;
- take such decisions as may be required in exceptional circumstances.

S3.6 The **IC** may appoint, from among its representatives, a **Secretary** and a **Treasurer**; both offices are optional, and their duties fall to the **President** where unfilled. The **Secretary** keeps the minutes of **IC** and **GA** meetings and distributes them to the relevant parties within 30 days, prepares agendas, and keeps the ICO's records and contact information up to date. The **Treasurer** is responsible for the financial affairs of the ICO.

S3.7 **IC** procedure:

- Voting is on the basis of "one voting representative, one vote".
- A quorum of one more than half of the voting representatives then in office, rounded down, must be present.
- In the event of a tie, the **President** casts the deciding vote.

- Notice of any **IC** meeting is given to all representatives at least one week in advance; an emergency meeting may be called on shorter notice when circumstances reasonably require it.
- **IC** meetings are closed; the **IC** may invite others to attend without a vote.

S3.8 The elected representatives are elected by the **GA** for three-year terms, staggered so that one retires by rotation each year; the **GA** elects a replacement at each ICO, and a retiring representative may stand again.

S3.9 The **IC** is chaired by the **President** of the ICO, an independent individual elected by the **General Assembly** for a renewable three-year term to give continuity and leadership, to promote the development of the ICO, and to act as its recognised ambassador. The **President** is not a member of a **Member Delegation**. In the **President's** absence, another representative present takes the chair.

The International Scientific Committee

S3.10 The **ISC** is the sole long-term scientific body of the ICO. It ensures an appropriate set of **Competition Tasks** is created, oversees the **Competition Tasks** and grading system, prepares and owns the **Contest Rules**, arbitrates evaluation disputes, and develops the scientific direction of the ICO, including technical and contest-environment matters. Its members are computer specialists, and none may be a **Delegation Leader**, **Deputy Leader** or **Contestant**. Its voting representatives are:

- one proposed by each of the **Hosts** of ICO'n, ICO'n-1 and ICO'n+1;
- three elected by the **GA** for three-year terms, staggered so that one retires each year;
- up to three further members appointed by the **IC**, proposed by the **ISC**, on up to three-year terms staggered so that at most one is ending each year.

The **ISC** may also appoint non-voting adjunct members.

S3.11 The Chair of the **ISC** is elected by the **ISC** from among its members at the end of each ICO, to serve for the following year, and reports to the **IC**. Voting in the **ISC** is "one voting representative, one vote". The Chair votes as a voting representative and, in the event of a tie, casts the deciding vote. A quorum of a majority of the voting representatives then in office must be present. **ISC** members are responsible for ensuring that no advantage is given to any **Contestant**.

S3.12 **ISC** and adjunct members keep all task material confidential until it is published at the ICO. Their travel to meetings is at their own expense.

The Board of Patrons

S3.13 The **Board of Patrons** is a permanent body constituted by the **IC** from respected figures in cybersecurity and business, to promote the ICO, advise the **IC**, act as intermediaries and help provide funding. **BP** members are appointed by the **IC** for renewable terms of five years and may step down at any time.

Removal and Vacancies

S3.14 Any representative of the **IC** or the **ISC**, including the **President**, may be removed by a two-thirds majority of the **General Assembly**. A member of the **Board of Patrons** may be removed by the **IC**.

S3.15 Where a seat elected by the **General Assembly** falls vacant between **General Assemblies**, the **IC** may co-opt a replacement to hold it until the next **General Assembly**, which elects a

successor for the remainder of the term. A vacancy in the office of **President** is filled in the same way, the **IC** designating one of its representatives to act as **President** in the interim.

Section 4: Hosts — Selection, Responsibilities and Replacement

S4.1 A **Member** capable and willing to host an ICO submits a Letter of Intent to the **IC**. The **IC** vets prospective **Hosts** — it may require evidence of venue, hardware, human resources, a draft budget and fund-raising plans — selects a nomination, and presents it to the **GA** for ratification. On ratification and the prospective **Host's** written acceptance, the **Member** becomes a **Future Host**, normally up to four years ahead.

S4.2 A **Future Host** becomes the **Present Host** at the close of the previous ICO's closing ceremony, and a **Past Host** at the close of its own. The **Present Host** organises and implements ICO'n in accordance with these Regulations and contributes to the **ISC** as provided in Section 3. The **Present Host** appoints its representatives to the **IC** and **ISC**; these should, so far as possible, remain the same throughout.

S4.3 Each **Future Host** prepares Guidelines for the organisation of its ICO, in English, provided to the **IC**, including a financing plan covering fees, sponsors and accounting. On request of the **IC**, the **Host** must demonstrate that the funding, venue and organisation necessary to deliver ICO'n are secured.

S4.4 The **Present Host** organises, in the city where the ICO will be held and around six months before ICO'n, the **Planning Meeting** — a meeting of the **IC**, the **ISC**, and the **Host** — to evaluate ICO'n-1, examine the organisation of ICO'n, and discuss the Guidelines. The **Host** covers the board and lodging of those attending the **Planning Meeting**. The **Contest Rules** follow their own timeline: the **ISC**, with assistance from the **IC** as needed, develops them at the **Planning Meeting**; circulates a draft to the community shortly afterwards for comment; and, taking that feedback into account, issues the final **Contest Rules** around one month before ICO'n.

S4.5 The **Present Host** provides board and lodging during ICO'n for all participants; the cost is partly met through the fees set out in S4.6.

S4.6 The **Host** may charge a **Registration Fee**, approved by the **IC**, for each **Member Delegation**, covering up to four **Contestants** and two Leaders. It may charge additional fees for **Observers** and **Guests** as it decides.

S4.7 The **Present Host** may field a second team, **Host-2**, of up to four **Contestants** and up to two Leaders, competing on equal footing with the other teams. **Host-2 Contestants** are **Non-Counting Contestants** (S5.4).

S4.8 By the end of ICO'n the **Host** issues attendance certificates for all participants and awarding certificates for medallists, and holds the closing ceremony, at which awards are presented. The **ISC** produces the full result list and the official solutions to the **Competition Tasks**; the **Host** sends its report on ICO'n to the **IC** no later than the first **IC** meeting for ICO'n+1.

S4.9 Where a **Present** or **Future Host** fails to fulfil its obligations, withdraws, or cannot demonstrate capacity under S4.3, the **IC** may withdraw that **Host's** status after giving written notice and, where time permits, a reasonable opportunity to remedy. The **IC's** power to remove a **Future Host** is reserved for extreme circumstances. If the status of **Present Host** is withdrawn or vacated, the **IC** acts on behalf of the **GA** to engage a replacement **Host**, to relocate or reschedule ICO'n, or, if no viable option exists, to cancel it, informing all **Members** as soon as practicable and reporting to the next **GA**.

Section 5: Competition, Judging and Awards

S5.1 The Competition takes place over two competition days, each directly preceded and followed by a non-competition day. The **Host** gives **Contestants** the opportunity to practise on the competition equipment, or comparable equipment, beforehand.

S5.2 The conduct of the Competition and the evaluation of **Contestants** are regulated by the **Contest Rules**.

S5.3 If a Leader disagrees with the evaluation or other matters affecting their **Contestants'** scores, they may appeal; the **ISC** investigates and decides. The **ISC's** decision may be further appealed to the **GA**, which may change it only by a two-thirds majority. Appeals must be submitted within the deadline set in the **Contest Rules**, and all appeals must be resolved before the scores are made final.

S5.4 Once the scores are final, awards follow automatically from them, with no approval step. A **Non-Counting Contestant** competes on equal footing and is eligible for medals, but is not counted in the medal allocation: their score does not affect the medal cut-offs, and each **Non-Counting Contestant** receives any medal their score earns. The score for a gold medal is the largest such that at least one twelfth of the **Contestants** counted in the allocation receive gold; for silver, the largest such that at least one quarter receive gold or silver; and for bronze, the smallest such that at most one half receive a medal. A **Contestant** who does not receive a medal receives an Honourable Mention if, on at least one of the two competition days, their score is at least the median score for that day among **Contestants** counted in the allocation.

S5.5 In the event of unethical behaviour, including conduct that brings individuals, **Members** or the ICO into disrepute, the **IC** is empowered to disqualify participants. If unforeseen large-scale problems occur during the Competition, the **ISC** decides an appropriate resolution and informs the **IC** and the **GA**; the **GA** may override the resolution by a two-thirds majority.

Section 6: Political Constraints on Participation

S6.1 A **Member** is presented under the name established for the corresponding entity by the United Nations or UNESCO; failing that, by ISO 3166; and failing that, under the name in common use, as approved by the **IC**. Where the source that determines a **Member's** name recognises a flag for it, that flag is used; otherwise the **IC** may approve a flag in common use, or none is used.

S6.2 The ICO recognises that a **Host** may face genuine constraints — whether in law or in binding practical or political circumstances — on the display of certain names or symbols at the event. Where such a constraint applies to the **Host**, the display of a **Member's** flag, name or other symbols on site and on the **Host's** own materials may be adjusted to the minimum extent the constraint requires, carried out as respectfully as possible towards the **Member**, and ordinarily by presenting the **Member** under the name determined under S6.1 without a flag. Such adjustment never extends to the ICO's own central website, communications or statistics, where every **Member** is represented equally and under the name so determined.

S6.3 Where a **Member** is unable to attend in person for exceptional reasons beyond its control — for example because its delegation cannot enter the host country — the **IC** and **ISC** endeavour to arrange supervised remote participation, with proctoring and preferably at a neutral location. Such **Contestants** are **Non-Counting Contestants** (S5.4).

Section 7: Revisions of the Regulations

S7.1 Revisions of the Regulations are prepared and proposed by the **IC** and adopted by the **GA** by a two-thirds majority. **Members** may submit proposals to the **IC**, through the **President**, for consideration; all proposals, whether adopted or rejected, are communicated to the **GA**.

S7.2 Revisions adopted during ICO'n become binding at the end of ICO'n. However, a revision proposed by the **IC** with at least one month's notice to the **Members** and adopted by the **GA** at the first **GA** meeting of ICO'n takes effect immediately upon adoption.