

2026 WCS SA Qualifiers Rules, Requirements & Guidelines

World Cosplay Summit South Africa and Comic Con Cape Town are proud to host the World Cosplay Summit: 2026 South African Regional Qualifier competition to select a qualified representative Cosplay Team who will win the right to represent South Africa at the World Cosplay Summit Championship in 2027 as Team South Africa!

The World Cosplay Summit (WCS) is an annual international cosplay competition held in Nagoya, Japan. Created to bring cosplayers together from around the globe to showcase their cosplay talents and foster a spirit of cultural exchange.

This document outlines the Rules, Requirements, and Guidelines for the World Cosplay Summit South African Regional qualifier.

- Section 1 details how to enter the competition
- Section 2 details the rules of the competition
- Section 3 details the judging criteria for the competition

Section 2.23, "Team South Africa In Japan", should be read and understood only as a guide as to what will be required of the winning team in Japan. Rules in this section are subject to change at any time, at the discretion of WCS Inc., Comic Con Cape Town, and the WeCosplaySA organisers.

Please take the time to read this document in full and make sure you understand the RULES, REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES.

WeCosplaySA and Comic Con Cape Town will bear no responsibility if you are unable to compete in the WeCosplaySA Regional Qualifier due to a failure to read and understand the Rules, Requirements & Guidelines. No special allowances or exemptions will be granted.

Contacting WeCosplaySA

If you require further clarification after reading all the RULES, REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES outlined in this document, please contact WeCosplaySA via these official contact means only:

WeCosplaySA Email - info@wecosplaysa.org.za

- When contacting WeCosplaySA, please write the words 'WCS Rule Query' in the subject. Describe the rule/s you have questions about, including their dot point number and page

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number, in the body of your email. If you contact WeCosplaySA without fully reading the RULES, REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES outlined in this document, you will be directed to do so.

- DO NOT contact any WeCosplaySA or Comic Con Cape Town staff or volunteers by any other means with regard to questions about the RULES, REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES outlined in this document.
- The WeCosplaySA organisers or Comic Con Cape Town staff or volunteers are not responsible for any misunderstandings or false information that arises from contacting individuals or discussing the RULES, REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES via any channels other than the WeCosplaySA email address.

Communication From WeCosplaySA

WeCosplaySA's main form of communication to Cosplay Teams competing in the WeCosplaySA Regional Qualifier will be via the WeCosplaySA email account. All important WeCosplaySA Regional Qualifier and Comic Con Cape Town WCS-related event information will be communicated from this email address and WeCosplaySA social media accounts.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES will a member (past or present) of the WeCosplaySA Committee, Staff, Volunteer, WeCosplaySA Alumni, or Judge (past or present) contact an individual or Cosplay Team in relation to; -

- Another Cosplay Team
- Your own or any other Team's Construction Book
- Your own or any other individual's private/personal information

If you receive any suspect messages from individuals who claim they represent WeCosplaySA or WCS Inc, please inform WeCosplaySA immediately via the WeCosplaySA email account.

If you receive any suspect messages from individuals who use their status to infer that they represent WeCosplaySA, please inform WeCosplaySA immediately via the WeCosplaySA email account.



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If you receive any suspect messages from individuals who state they are giving you private information or hints, and ask you to keep their communication confidential, this is an immediate red flag. WeCosplaySA will never favour one team over another or leak special/private information. Please inform WeCosplaySA immediately via the WeCosplaySA email account.

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World Cosplay Summit is the biggest cosplay event in the world, with regional champions flying to Nagoya, Japan for an incredible experience at the World Championship event. This document outlines the rules and procedures for the World Cosplay Summit South African Regional Qualifier for 2026.

1. WCS SA Regional Qualifier Entry Procedures

1.1 - South African Regional Qualifier entries are for one (1) team of two (2) cosplayers. There will be no exceptions regarding this number.

1.2 - Each team member must be 18 years of age or older on or before the Regional Qualifier date in order to compete.

1.3 - Entrants must submit a single completed application form via the online registration link:

<https://forms.gle/v4m4wPUfr46a63Y7>

Closing date for entries will be SUNDAY, 29th MARCH 2026.

1.4 - For the 2026 WCS SA Regional Qualifier, each team member must either be born in South Africa or have the right of permanent residence in South Africa. Please send proof of permanent residency (Passport or RSA ID Book or RSA ID card) with your completed application.

1.5 - Entrants must submit a single portfolio, also known as a **Construction Report**, for the team that outlines their costume plans, as well as provides photographic evidence of their costume creation. A sample portfolio template will be made available online. Entrants may customise their portfolio as they see fit and are free to add any extra information they think will help judges make their decision, however they must include all the compulsory information as listed in the sample portfolio in order to be eligible. Portfolios must be submitted in PDF format and must not exceed 250 mbs. Portfolios must be submitted by email to info@wecosplaysa.org.za no later than SUNDAY, 21ST APRIL 2026.

1.6 - Please Note: no new entrants will be accepted on the day of the competition.

1.7 - Please ensure you provide a working email address in your completed form.

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1.8 - Entrants MUST prepare one set of homemade costumes. Please refer to SECTION 2.1 - 2.5 for more information.

1.9 - All team presentations and costumes will be assessed as per SECTION 3 of this document.

1.10 - Entrants MUST BE AVAILABLE TO TRAVEL TO JAPAN IN NOVEMBER 2027. As such, you must have a valid passport with at least six (6) months validity beyond November 30th, 2027. The WCS SA Regional Organisers will be responsible for the flights to and from Japan as well as the visa costs of the winning team.

1.11 - The winning WCS SA team will be allowed to extend their stay in Japan, or arrive earlier, however they will be responsible for their own accommodation and expenses during this/these times. The return international flight will still be covered by the WCS SA event organisers.

1.12 - Entrants must be available for the evening of Thursday 30th April, 2026 (for stage practice) and the entirety of Saturday 1st May, 2026 for judging and performing. Entrants will be notified no later than one week prior to the event of their scheduled judging time. Please ensure you have a working email address as the WeCosplaySA organising team and Comic Con Cape Town take no responsibility if you are not informed of your competition status. Some entries may be eliminated based on their portfolio submission if the entry is found inappropriate or breaks any of the rules outlined here.

2. WCS Competition Rules in South Africa and Japan Rules & Regulations

2.1 - Entrants must present themselves in the costume of a character from any anime, manga or Japanese game. Characters originally from (Western) comics and games, movies or anything else that are unrelated to Japanese popular culture will not be accepted in this competition. For example, Disney characters such as Mickey Mouse being presented in Japanese games such as Kingdom Hearts does not make them eligible characters to enter into this competition. Entrants must provide official art references for their entry in their portfolio submission: fanart adaptations will not be accepted.

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Please contact us prior to entry submissions being made if uncertain about the eligibility of a particular character.

2.2 - Commercially available cosplay costumes are not allowed in the WCS SA Regional Qualifier Competition or the WCS Championship in Japan but may be used by Team South Africa in the Cosplay Parade in Nagoya, cultural tour events and in media appearances (but is not recommended).

2.3 - Costumes must be hand-made, with teams making at least 95% of their costumes themselves. Prefabricated and/or purchased costumes will not be permitted, however prefabricated items may be permitted if they have been substantially altered by the entrant; this includes items such as wigs, shoes, or gloves. Larger articles of clothing such as shirts, dresses, skirts & pants MUST be hand-made.

2.4 - Authentic, metal or specific replica weapons such as swords, axes, shuriken, firearms, etc., are not permitted as props for WCS Championship or the Regional Qualifier event. Projectile weapons (even plastic ones) are also not permitted as props. Please be aware that the WCS SA Regional Qualifier will take place at Comic Con Cape Town, which will have its own restrictions in relation to weaponry on premises.

2.5 - Any props or portions of costumes that are created using a 3D printer must have their digital 3D model created by a member of the competing team. YOU MUST have evidence of the competing team creating the original digital file prior to printing as well as finishing after. Evidence of construction can be highlighted in a team's portfolio.

2.6 - Entrants may use stage props to enhance their performance. There is a limit of three (3) stage props per team, with no limit to the number of hand-held props (such as: swords, dolls, etc.) as long as the entrant is able to carry them. The WCS SA Event Team will be responsible for carrying stage props on & off the stage, however we take no responsibility if a prop is damaged during the process of the event (the utmost care will be taken when handling your own team's props). Each stage prop may not weigh more than 10kgs & must not exceed the measurement of 2.1m x 2.1m x 0.9m. Please note, the winning team will be required to bring these props to the World Cosplay Summit Championship event in Japan, so thought and care should be given to how easy it is to move the item and how it can be repaired, if needed.

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2.7 - There will be a limit of **2 and a half minutes** for any skits performed. Points will be deducted if teams exceed this time limit.

2.8 - The use of audio files and videos as part of the performance is permitted. Teams should prepare the audio/video necessary for their performance. These files must be submitted by **11:59 pm SUNDAY, 26th APRIL, 2026**.

2.9 - Videos can either be live-action video or an animation. Only the competing team can appear (no other people allowed) in the live-action videos and the duo can be either the characters they appear as on stage or other characters in the same series. If the team chooses to have an animation in the video, it must be original work (drawn by the duo or friends). Footage from the original anime or game cannot be used. The video should be in 16:9 format. Teams should be conscious of usage rights when it comes to any audio used and cannot use any copyrighted material.

2.10 - The performance must be in English language. Other languages may be used if relevant and understandable without translation (e.g. 'Bonjour' for French characters).

2.11 - During the performance, the duo cannot leave the stage unattended for more than 20 seconds.

2.12 – A single day pass will be required to Comic Con Cape Town for the day of the final judging (ie Friday 1st May 2026). A pass will not be required for stage practice on the evening of Thursday, 30th April 2026, which will take place after the event closes.

2.13 - It is NOT possible to scatter things on-stage during your performance, especially projectile weapons (nerf bullets), glitter or confetti. Staining, marking or damaging the stage in any way is prohibited and will result in instant disqualification, & reimbursement damages will be demanded on behalf of the venue.

2.14 - Using fire or liquids of any sort on stage is prohibited and will result in instant disqualification.

2.15 – Smoke-related special effects are prohibited and will result in instant disqualification.

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2.16 - The WeCosplaySA Organising Team, Comic Con Cape Town team, event volunteers and the last WCS SA Team selected to compete in Japan (i.e. 2025 winners) are not eligible to compete in the 2026 WCS SA Regional Qualifier.

2.17 - Entrants may not enter any costumes in the WCS SA Regional Qualifier that have been used in any previous WCS competitions anywhere in the world without significant changes/upgrades. These changes/upgrades must be clearly identified in the Construction Report.

2.18 - Entrants are not allowed to touch or damage other entrants' costume(s) or prop(s) without clear consent of its owner. They may face immediate disqualification and removal from the venue.

2.19 - The WeCosplaySA Organising Team and the Comic Con Cape Town team reserves the right to adjust the competition rules in any way it sees fit and disqualify any entry for non-compliance with the rules outlined in this document. Fair notice will be given in the event of rules changes.

2.20 - Permission is granted to WeCosplaySA, World Cosplay Summit Japan, and Comic Con Cape Town to use any photographs/video taken of entrant's costumes for future promotions of the event.

2.21 - WeCosplaySA and Comic Con Cape Town reserve the right to refuse entry/display to any costumes entered to the competition that it deems inappropriate and also reserves the right to cancel or cut short any acts that it deems to be inappropriate. Decisions are final.

2.22 - By entering the competition, the participant agrees to abide by the terms and conditions as set out in this document. Participants who do not follow these rules will be disqualified. Teams should also be familiar with the rules governing competition and participation in Japan in order to avoid any changes or adjustments that would be required to their costumes or skit.

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Team South Africa In Japan

2.23 - Rules from point 2.23 to 2.52 relate specifically to the World Cosplay Summit Championship event in Japan. These rules are subject to change over time & will only affect the winning team.

2.24 - To participate in a preliminary round event, cosplayers must have proof of citizenship or permanent residency of the country or area holding the event. Please contact your WCS national organiser (for South Africa, WeCosplaySA) if you have any questions regarding national representation qualifications.

2.25 - You are required to bring a minimum of three costumes to Japan: one for the red carpet, one for the championship, and one for courtesy visits. It is highly recommended that the costumes used for the red carpet event & courtesy visits be suitable for the summer weather. The World Cosplay Summit 2027 event will be held, for the first time, in Winter are held during Summer, and the temperatures can be very cool for participants in or out of costume. It is advised you wear costumes that are comfortable to wear in these conditions. All costume choices should be discussed well in advance with the WCS national organiser.

2.26 - The costumes must be from Japanese anime, manga, tokusatsu and video games

* Doujinshi and unique characters from live-actor movies based on anime or manga are not permitted (i.e. Dragon Ball Evolution, etc.)

* When doing a costume from a game, the character must be recognisably Japanese (i.e. not a Disney or Star Wars character even though the game may be made in Japan).

2.27 - In the WCS Championship, please make sure the costumes of the characters in which both of you will appear are from the same Japanese manga, anime, tokusatsu or video game series. It is not necessary to co-ordinate costumes for other WCS related events.

2.28 - During the World Cosplay Summit events (WCS Championship, red carpet event and media appearances), cosplay costumes should be hand-made by the contestants themselves. Commercially available cosplay costumes are not allowed in the WCS Championship but may be used in the red carpet event and media appearances (but not recommended).

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2.29 - You are required to be responsible for the cost of any overweight luggage charges when shipping costumes and other items. It is not possible to send them to Japan by air or ship beforehand.

2.30 - You should co-operate positively in order to ensure the success of the World Cosplay Summit.

2.31 - Media such as TV programs, internet home pages, newspapers, magazines, etc., may use your pictures and images of the preliminary contests prior to the World Cosplay Summit. On these occasions, compensation will not be furnished for the use of cosplayers images.

2.32 - Image rights in all media exposure such as news from TV programs and other assorted media involved with the World Cosplay Summit, promotional activities in the print media as well as events and performances, announcements of the Cosplay Summit both prior to the event and during your stay in Japan, will be attributed to World Cosplay Summit Executive Committee.

2.33 - After the World Cosplay Summit has finished, images/footage of cosplayers, photographs, programs, broadcast, internet home pages and DVDs etc., come under the jurisdiction of World Cosplay Summit Executive Committee.

Compensation will not be furnished for such images used by the media. (Your signature will be required regarding this matter.)

2.34 - Please send the documents and sound file at least one month before the date of the Cosplay Championship including performance sheets, images of characters (wearing the same costumes to be worn in the championship), costume construction report (PDF or Word file format. Limit the amount to what can be presented in a short 10-minute presentation to be use in craftsmanship judging), information on large props (size, images, placement location and weight of each item), music sound file, participation appearance agreement.

2.35 - All clothes, hand-held props (including weapons) and especially stage settings should be handmade. Using commercially available items such as replica swords is, in principle, forbidden. If used, they will not be included in the "Small Props" section during the costume judging.

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2.36 - Take all safety precautions with stage weapons and props. Should the WCS secretariat judge that a prop used in the performance is a danger to the audience (i.e. slip from hands and cause injury to audience members) the WCS secretariat may prohibit the use of that prop.

2.37 - All equipment, costumes and props for the Cosplay Championship performance are limited to a maximum weight of 40 kilograms combined for both performers. **You will be required to report the weight of each item.**

2.38 - All large props set on stage before the Cosplay Championship performance are limited to a maximum weight of 10 kilograms. Prop dimensions are limited to 2.1m in height, 2.1m in width and .9m in depth.

2.39 - All large props set on stage are limited to a maximum of 3 items. Dimensions of handheld props carried onto the stage must be relayed to WCS head office in written form and accompanied by photographs.

2.40 - It is not permitted to directly copy original drawings, logos or graphic art to your equipment or props.

2.41 - Please prepare your own music for your performance. A performance sheet stating what you will perform is to be submitted in advance. The use of voice actor's voices from original works in your music is prohibited.

2.42 - When displaying the words used during the performance on the stage screen in Japanese subtitles, we recommend using your native language when speaking the lines.

2.43 - The performance at the Championship can be the same as the performance given in the preliminary round, but if it is the same, your performance should be augmented to a level appropriate for the Championship.

2.44 - Please strictly adhere to the time limit of 2 minutes and 30 seconds. Stage staff will set the maximum 3 stage props before your performance and remove them after your performance. There will be 40 seconds to make the necessary changes before the next group begins.

2.45 - The props on stage will not be subject to evaluation by the judges.

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2.46 - Only the 2 designated representative cosplayers and 2 designated organisers/interpreter/volunteers are permitted to enter the backstage area of the WCS Championship. Family, friends and related press will have seats provided for them and must remain in the audience.

2.47 - The organiser and WCS staff or any other person is not permitted to help you during your performance on stage. (Members of the stage staff will help you set up props on stage).

2.48 - It is possible to scatter confetti on-stage during your performance, but it must be limited to 200 pieces & 1 inch x 1 inch in size. Staining, marking or damaging the stage in any way is prohibited. Anything that takes time to clean up on stage is also not allowed.

2.49 - It is prohibited to take your performance into the audience area.

2.50 - Special effects, etc. produced using the following materials are not allowed: powder, small metallic confetti, fire (smoke), water, paper confetti smaller than 2cm (includes flower petals and feathers scattered on stage), crackers using gunpowder (crackers not using gunpowder can be used, however the paper confetti expelled from the cracker must still observe the 2cm rule mentioned above). The WCS Secretariat will stop any performance that it deems dangerous or a hindrance to stage conversion. When planning any special stage effects, please consult the WCS Secretariat in advance.

2.51 - Although special effects using the following items are possible, only those using WCS Secretariat approved equipment will be allowed. Regarding the use of laser lights: since Japanese law restricts laser light output for safety reasons, only those machines specified by the WCS Secretariat are allowed. If you wish to use a laser light, please consult the WCS Secretariat.

2.52 - Performance order is decided by lottery. Every country representative will be taking part in the lottery with the same chances of placement. Once decided, the order cannot be changed unless there is urgent medical necessity.

3. World Cosplay Summit Regional Qualifying Tournament: Judging Criteria and Competition Prizes

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3.1 - Judging is carried out in two parts:

- * On Stage Judging
- * Craftsmanship Judging

3.2 - Teams MUST attend the stage rehearsal on Thursday, 30th April 2026, and the Craftsmanship judging session on Friday 1st May 2026, before the Performance component of the competition to allow judges to examine the costumes and for entrants to answer any questions the judges may have regarding their performance or costumes. During the Regional Qualifier, teams will perform on the main stage in front of a panel of 3 to 5 Judges. Judges will select the best of the teams as the winning team based on the criteria and process outlined below, which are carried out to the same standards worldwide.

3.3 - Each on-stage judge of the WCS SA Regional Qualifier can award 50 points for Performance, 25 points for Stage Expression, and 25 points for Character Fidelity, for a maximum total of 100 points.

- a) Performance (50 points): art of performance, inventiveness, entertainment value, and smoothness of act.
- b) Stage Expression (25 points): faithfulness of performance to the original character and story. Ability to grip the audience's attention and show your obsession of your chosen character.
- c) Character Fidelity (25 points): faithfulness in movement, look and flow of costume to the original character, general visual impact of the costume on stage. The cosplayers may make some changes to the costumes for better performance (i.e. change shoes for on stage, etc.), as far as the change does not detract from the essential character or work. In this case the cosplayers must provide an oral and/or written explanation about the reasoning behind deviating from the original work to the judges during craftsmanship judging.

* If a team breaks the time limit rule for stage preparation, a penalty on the team's point score will be imposed on the performance score

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* 10% total point deduction for exceeding the time limit by up to 10 seconds, 25% total point deduction for exceeding the time limit for more than 10 seconds.

3.4 - Craftsmanship judging is carried out on the Saturday before the Performance component of the competition and craftsmanship points will be added to the score from the on-stage judging. Each judge can give up to 100 points. An average score is calculated which is then multiplied by the number of on-stage judges and then divided by 10 to give the final craftsmanship score. The Craftsmanship judging will be subdivided into the following categories:

(a) Accuracy of the costume (40 points):

(b) Quality of the costume (40 points): Quality is marked based on several factors, including how well the costume is put together, how well it fits the contestant, how neat painting, sewing, etc. has been done.

(c) Technique/Technology (20 point): technique is marked as a way to reward skills. A costume that used a wide variety of difficult skills will be awarded higher marks in this category than a costume that uses a few simple techniques. Examples include intelligent ways to do a quick change of look (during performance), use of 3D printers, etc.

* The mind-set put forth in the Craftsmanship Judging Guide is to be used as the benchmark during judging.

* If a team is found to break costume rules outlined in this document, the craftsmanship judges are able to penalise the craftsmanship score of that team. Penalties may vary depending on rules broken.

* Please note the winners of the competition are held as ambassadors for South African Cosplayers. Entrants should exhibit a positive & supportive attitude. Judges may penalise an entrant based on attitude. Penalties may vary depending on rules broken.

* Portfolio submissions should be taken seriously as judges will use this as guide for your craftsmanship score. More detailed portfolios may score higher than a portfolio with limited information.

* Costumes to be worn on stage and handheld props will be subject to craftsmanship judging. Stage props are not subject to judging

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* Background screens or larger props on stage are not subject to judging.

3.5 - The winning team chosen by the Judges of the 2026 WCS South African Regional Qualifier will receive an invitation to represent South Africa in the 2027 WCS Championship Competition to be held in Nagoya, Japan, as well as two return plane tickets and one week of organised accommodation. A WeCosplaySA organiser will follow and guide the progress of the team to the championship. Additional prizes will be provided at the discretion of the event organisers.

3.6 - The previous WCS Team South Africa representative team to attend the WCS Championship in Japan may not enter any WCS Regional Qualifier within one (1) year of their attendance in Japan.

3.7 - The judging panel cannot consist of any current WCS SA team members or Comic Con Cape Town directors or members that are competing in the competition. No more than half of the judging panel may be members or directors of the WCS SA team or Comic Con Cape Town representatives.

3.8 - Once the winning team has been announced, entrants may request feedback from selected judges regarding their costumes & performance. Judges will only offer feedback to the entrants who request it. Please note that Judges comments are given for the benefit of the entrant to help them improve in the future. Comments provided do not reflect the opinion of the WCS SA Organising team, Mogull Media, or Comic Con Cape Town. Feedback will be provided via email once the event is completed.

3.9 - The winning team must sign contract documentation from the World Cosplay Summit Inc. If winners do not sign the contracts & documentation required, they will forfeit their prize and title.

3.10 - Stage dimensions will be advised as soon as possible.

4. WCS Regional Qualifier Registration Process

4.1 - The WCS Regional Qualifier is managed and co-ordinated by WeCosplaySA, in conjunction with GeekXP Promotions (Pty) Ltd. All queries should be directed to info@wecosplaysa.org.za.



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4.2 - Payment for entry into the WCS Regional Qualifier is R250 per team. Payment can be made to the following account:

Bank: FNB

Account Type: Cheque

Account Number: 629 171 962 49

Account Name: GeekXP Promotions (Pty) Ltd

Reference: Please use the code WCS followed by your team name
e.g. "WCS SA (Cosplay Team Name)"

* Please note: only EFT payments will be accepted, strictly no cash deposits. Failure to make payment by EFT may result in your booking not being secured. Please mail proof of payment to info@wecosplaysa.org.za