

Cosplay Central Crown Championships 2026

Rules for Global Finalists

The Cosplay Central Crown Championships Final (“**Crown Championships**” or “**Championships Final**”) will be hosted at MCM Comic Con London, which is owned, organised and staged by Reed Exhibitions Limited (“**ReedPop**”), at ExCel London, Royal Victoria Dock, 1 Western Gateway, London E16 1XL, to take place in May 2026.

These rules set out the criteria for the cosplayers, their responsibilities if selected to compete in the Crown Championship Final, and the details of the Final.

How To Enter

The Cosplay Central Crown Championships are comprised of a series of competitions held at ReedPop events, selected global Partner Events, and the Championships Final. Each event will organize a competition to select one (1) cosplayer to be their representative National Finalist for the Global Final in 2026.

The core regulations for all competitions to select Finalists are:

1. Events must select a representative who will be aged 18 years old or over by the start of the event where the Final is hosted.
2. Competitors can only enter one qualifying event per Championship circuit. Competitors may not register multiple times with multiple costumes, or at multiple events, per year.
3. Events may choose to restrict applications to registered citizens or permanent residents of the country the event takes place in or they may extend eligibility to registered citizens from countries that do not have a qualifier as well. Eligibility criteria based on residency must be clear in their advertised rules.
4. The selected representative must be fairly selected from all eligible people hoping to be selected and that person must not be involved with the organization of any Partner Events or ReedPop/Reed Exhibitions events for at least 12 months prior to the selection.

Partner events are free to set the format, rules and criteria of their independent qualifier but it is strongly advised that they consider incorporating the rules for the final to ensure selected Finalists are properly prepared.

Rules For The Cosplay Central Crown Championships Final

The Cosplay Central Crown Championships Final will be held on Saturday at MCM London Comic Con and will involve both costume judging and a stage-based presentation of the costume.

1: Costume Eligibility

- Costumes for the Cosplay Central Crown Championships Final must represent an existing or recognizable character or element from the pop culture realm, including comic books, movies and television, video games, anime, manga, theatre or fantasy. Characters or elements from bands, musicians and drag acts are not eligible.
 - Costumes replicating published designs from comic books, movies and television, video games, anime, manga, theatre or fantasy, including derivative designs by well-known concept artists (that have been publicly available for at least one year and not directly commissioned by the Finalist), will be judged on “**Accuracy**” i.e. the detail and steps taken to create a costume that is accurate to the given reference material.
 - Costumes inspired by existing characters but given an original twist, e.g. character mash ups or interpreting a recognizable character in an alternative style, will be judged on the “**Design**” choices and decisions taken to create a cohesive costume.
 - *Further information on these categories can be found in Appendix A.*
- Finalists must have made the costume they are using in selection events and the Final by themselves.
 - All significant visible costume elements that can safely be made without assistance must have been constructed entirely by the competitor;
 - If it is impossible or unsafe for a single person to make a costume element, assistance for simple tasks such as holding things in place is acceptable;
 - It is acceptable to use bought wigs, shoes, and accessories such as spectacles as long as they are not customized or commissioned. Simple, largely insignificant base layers such as a leotard or pantyhose are

similarly permitted. Any customization such as styling a wig or modifying shoes must be the sole work of the Finalist to be considered as part of the costume by the judges;

- Instruction and planning advice is acceptable, as long as the practical construction of the costume is by the Finalist.
- Costumes must be worn by the selected Finalist and cannot be presented on a model.
- The costume used for the Championships Final must not have been used for any previous international cosplay or costume contest Final.
- Finalists are expected to wear the costume that they qualified in for the Championships Final; should a Finalist wish to compete in an alternative costume this may be permitted following discussion with the ReedPop team.
- The costume should not exceed 2.5 metres/8ft in any one dimension, and the Finalist should be able to safely move in the costume with limited assistance and the costume must not impede the Finalist's ability to get on and off stage.
- All costumes should provide enough coverage to be worn in public and should be in good taste and appropriate for a family-friendly show.
- Costumes cannot be obscene or offensive, including insensitive or unnecessary use of makeup, nor endorse any form of hate or any hate group. Gore, graphic violence or other objectionable elements may also be grounds for disqualification as determined by the judges or ReedPop.
- Costumes cannot promote alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, firearms/weapons (or the use of any of the foregoing), any activities that may appear unsafe or dangerous or any particular political agenda or message.
- Costumes must not defame, misrepresent or contain disparaging remarks about Cosplay Central, ReedPop and their products, or other people, products or companies, or communicate messages or images inconsistent with the positive images and/or goodwill with which Cosplay Central and/or ReedPop intends to associate the Competition.
- Costumes cannot depict, and cannot themselves, be in violation of any English, US or other applicable law.
- All Finalists must provide pictures from the source material of the costume as a reference for the official appearance of the character they are cosplaying in sufficiently high resolution. Original designs should also be supported by concept sketches.
- Construction or progress pictures must be brought by the Finalist to their judging session; not supplied electronically.
- Finalists are not restricted from accepting sponsorship for the creation of the costume, provided that it places no obligations on ReedPop. Such sponsor cannot be included in the stage description or included in any promotional activity by ReedPop relating to the competition.

2: Stage Presentation

Finalists must showcase their costume on the Main Stage in the Championship Final.

This will be a catwalk style presentation, showcasing the costume's features to the audience, while facts about the costume are read by the host.

- The Stage presentation will not be scored directly but may be taken into consideration if the presentation reveals flaws or benefits of the costume's construction.
- Each Finalist will be on stage for a minimum of thirty (30) seconds and a maximum of two (2) minutes.
- Presentations must be suitable for a family audience. No profanity is allowed on stage, including messages on signs or clothes.
- ReedPop will provide background music. Background videos are not accepted.
- The safety of the audience, staff, and other Finalists must not be compromised. This means that pyrotechnics, fireworks or any other methods of creating or causing a naked flame or explosion are forbidden; anything that may litter the stage (e.g. glitter or confetti) or make it slippery or sticky is similarly banned. The use of lasers, regardless of strength, is not permitted by the venue.
 - Self-generated, water-based vapor as part of a costume may be permitted for use on stage following assessment by the ReedPop team

3: Judging

Costume judging will take place before the stage presentation and assesses the accuracy of the costume against provided source images or the design skill and interpretation of original designs, the ambition and complexity of the costume design, the quality of construction and the techniques employed to realize the costume. This is further detailed in Appendix A.

- It is the responsibility of the Finalist to be present for judging at the time decided by ReedPop. Failure to do so may lead to a penalty to the Finalist's score or exclusion from the judging.
- The weighting for each of the judging criteria is as follows:
 - Accuracy or Design – 20%
 - Ambition - 10%
 - Construction – 70%
- The top 3 entries identified by the judges will receive the following prizes:
 - First place £4000, Award & Title of "Crown Champion"
 - Second place £2000, Award
 - Third place £1000, Award
- The judges' decisions are final, and no further negotiation is permitted. There is no obligation on ReedPop or the judges to provide feedback.
- All Finalists, and their guests, are expected to behave with good conduct and respect each other and the judges, accepting their decisions in good faith and good spirits.

4: General

- **USE OF DATA:** Each Finalist's information will be collected and used by Reed Exhibitions Limited in accordance with the Privacy Policy ("the Privacy Policy") posted on <https://privacy.reedexpo.com/en-us.html>, which is incorporated herein by this reference. By entering the Crown Championships, each Finalist agrees and acknowledges that he or she has read, understood and agrees to be bound by (i) these Official Rules; and (ii) the Privacy Policy, each as may be amended by Reed Exhibitions Limited. All Finalists are expected to review the Privacy Policy carefully before participating in the Crown Championships and each Finalist acknowledges that, in the event of a conflict or inconsistency between the terms of these Official Rules and the terms of the Privacy Policy, the terms of the Privacy Policy shall prevail, govern and control. In addition, Reed Exhibitions Limited may engage third party entities to administer certain aspects of the Crown Championships, including, without limitation, the collection of Finalist information. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Privacy Policy, Reed Exhibitions Limited may share Finalist's information with third party entities to the extent needed to perform their duties and functions in connection with the Crown Championships or otherwise in accordance with their own independent privacy practices.
- **LIMITATION ON LIABILITY; FORCE MAJEURE:** Each Finalist agrees that Reed Exhibitions Limited shall not be responsible or liable for, and is hereby released from, any and all claims, costs, injuries, losses or damages of any kind, relating to any of the following: (a) incomplete, inaccurate, lost, late, misdirected or illegible entries, winner notifications, Prize claims, or Winner Forms or the failure to receive same due to any cause, including without limitation human or technical problems, failures, or malfunctions of any kind, whether originating with Finalist, Reed Exhibitions Limited or otherwise, that may prevent or limit any Finalist's ability to participate in the Crown Championships or send or receive messages requiring action or response by such Finalist; (b) any computer system, phone line, hardware, software or program malfunctions, or other errors, failures, hacks, unauthorized access, delayed computer transmissions or network connections in connection with the Crown Championships; (c) any problems or technical malfunction of any network or lines, servers or providers, equipment or software, including any injury or damage to Finalist or Finalist's property resulting from participation in the Crown Championships; (d) the awarding, acceptance, possession, use, misuse, loss or misdirection of any Prize or participation in any Prize related activities or any inability of any winner to accept a Prize for any reason; (e) any Finalists who do not comply with or who violate the Official Rules or who have committed fraud or deception in participating in the Crown Championships or in claiming a Prize; or (f) any delays or disruptions as a result of a Force Majeure (as defined herein).
- Reed Exhibitions Limited reserves the right to modify, suspend, extend or terminate the Crown Championships or any part thereof if Reed Exhibitions Limited determines, in its sole discretion, that the Crown Championships is technically impaired or corrupted or that infection by computer virus, bugs, tampering, unauthorised intervention, fraud, technical problems, failures, malfunctions or other causes have destroyed, corrupted or undermined the administration, security, fairness, integrity or feasibility of the Crown Championships or any portion thereof as contemplated herein. In the event Reed Exhibitions Limited is prevented from continuing with the Crown Championships or awarding any Prizes by any event beyond its control, including but not limited to fire, flood, epidemic, earthquake, explosion, labor dispute or strike, act of God or public enemy, satellite or equipment failure, riot or civil disturbance, terrorist threat or activity, war (declared or undeclared) or any federal state or local government law, order, or regulation, order of any court or jurisdiction, or other cause not reasonably within Reed Exhibitions Limited's control (each a "Force Majeure" event or occurrence), Reed Exhibitions Limited shall have the right to modify, suspend, extend or terminate the Crown Championships at its sole discretion or to select a winner from entries received prior to such Force Majeure or as otherwise deemed fair and appropriate by Reed Exhibitions Limited.
- Although Reed Exhibitions Limited shall attempt to ensure the integrity of the Crown Championships, Reed Exhibitions Limited is not responsible for the actions of Finalists, or their associated guests, in connection with the Crown Championships, including any Finalist's attempt to circumvent the Official Rules or otherwise interfere with the administration, security, fairness, integrity, or proper conduct of the Crown Championships. Reed Exhibitions Limited reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to disqualify any Finalist and/or revoke any Prize award to any Finalist whom Reed Exhibitions Limited finds to be (a) tampering with the entry process or the operation of the Crown Championships, or with any website promoting the Crown Championships; (b) acting in violation of the Official Rules; or (c) engaging in any harassing or offensive behavior as outlined in [the Anti-Harassment Policy](#), which is incorporated herein by this reference. Once a decision on disqualification or revocation has been made or notified to the Finalist, it cannot be appealed in any way.

Where alternative language versions of this document are provided, the English version is the official version and takes precedence. In the event of any dispute arising, these Rules, which were last updated on 2nd June 2025, are to be interpreted in accordance with the laws of England and Wales.

APPENDIX A

Detailed Description of Judging Criteria

The Championships are judged by three independent guest judges who interview and closely assess the Finalists' costumes in addition to assessing how the Finalists display their costume on stage.

This document provides greater guidance to the judges of what is expected in their marking, as well as greater clarity to Finalists, event organizers, and the audience as to the mechanics and thought processes behind the judging.

The assessment of Finalists is as follows:

- Costume judging will take place before the stage presentation and assess the accuracy or design of the costume against provided source images and the quality and complexity of the construction. Each Finalist is given equal time with the judges.
- The Stage presentation will not be scored directly but may be taken into consideration if the presentation reveals flaws or benefits of the costume's construction.
- The weighting for each of the judging criteria is as follows:
 - Accuracy or Design – 20%
 - Ambition - 10%
 - Construction – 70%

This document examines these areas including standards for scoring bands and how the different elements of each of those scores may interact.

Note that, in recognition of the wide variety of costumes possible and the judge's knowledge and experience, the elements considered within each category are not intended to be exhaustive and the weighting among the elements of the scores is left to the discretion of the judges on a costume by costume basis. Ultimately ReedPop, Partner events, and Finalists must respect the judges' decision, the judges' interpretation of the rules and guidance and the judges' assessment of the costume.

Accuracy or Design & Ambition

This is an assessment of how closely the costume matches the source material OR the design and interpretation skill employed by the Finalist to create original costume designs inspired by pop culture icons. Judges will also consider the ambition or complexity of the design.

It is the responsibility of the Finalist to provide high quality reference images which clearly depict as much of the character they are representing as possible, at a suitable resolution that detail is clearly visible. Original designs should also be supported by concept sketches and inspiration references.

If a Finalist with an original concept has commissioned a professional artist to render their design, this will be judged under the Design category, providing the Finalist is able to discuss in detail the background research and concept choices to arrive at the final design. Where there has been a more intensive collaboration and input from the commissioned artist, this may be judged on accuracy or a blend of the two categories, at ReedPop and the judges' discretion.

Finalists are expected to make use of makeup and shaping for their costumes where appropriate, but it is not a modelling contest, accuracy extends to the costume itself not the physical traits of the cosplayer wearing it. The spirit of the competition allows people to choose who or what they want to portray, according to their cosplay skills.

The following tables have suggested considerations for judges when assessing scores for this category: For costumes aiming for **ACCURACY** i.e. exactly replicating published designs:

Score	Detailing	Proportions	Colours & Texture
1-5	Costume is lacking noticeable costume elements such as gloves, hats, jackets, etc.	The costume is awkward with sections heavily overlapping or too far apart.	Colours and type of surface do not match the reference.
6-10	Costume includes all noticeable costume elements but detail is visibly different even at a distance	Costume is a cohesive whole but the ratios of most of the parts are far from those in the reference.	Colours are an approximate match and the texture appears to be a good match from a distance.
11-15	Costume includes all elements but detail is somewhat different when close	All major parts of the costume are well proportioned with regards to each other and the reference but designs and detailing are not.	Colours are a good match and the textures meet expectations when closely inspected.
16-19	Costume includes all elements and is well detailed	The scaling of all major parts of the costume are perfect, and the designs and detailing are also a good reflection of the source.	Colours are an excellent match and textures are good choices considering the source material.
20	Costume is immaculately detailed and all elements match the reference precisely	The scaling of all parts and detail of the costume are precise and correct.	Colours and textures are a perfect match.

For costumes of original **DESIGN** i.e. inspired by existing characters but given an original twist, e.g., character mash ups or interpreting a recognizable character in an alternative style

Score	Interpretation	Fidelity/truth to source	Proportions
1-5	The costume is very simple, or has a disjointed design	Costume has very few visual clues or colours or is at odds with the source inspiration	The costume is awkward with sections heavily overlapping or too far apart.
6-10	The costume has several elements, with some variety of detail and makes some considered design choices but lacks originality	Costume takes some visual clues or colours from the source inspiration	Costume is generally cohesive with most parts appropriately scaled
11-16	The costume is impressive, well detailed with features included for aesthetic and function and makes well considered design choices to create a cohesive design	Costume makes very good use of visual clues, colors and textures from the source inspiration	The scaling of all major parts of the costume are excellent
17-20	The costume is very complex, immaculately detailed with several features for aesthetics and function and a truly original, cohesive design	Costume is instantly recognizable and materials, colors and textures are faithful to the source inspiration	The scaling of all parts and detail of the costume are precise and considered.

Each judge will provide a total score out of 20 for either ACCURACY or DESIGN with due consideration to each element above; this score has a weighting of 20% for the final score.

AMBITION

Score	
1-2	Costume is so simple that little detail is needed.
3-4	Costume contains very few elements and the detail lacks variety or is unchallenging.
5-6	Costume includes several elements and is moderately challenging in scale or level of detail
7-9	Costume is well detailed and an ambitious costume to have created.
10	Costume is incredibly detailed and is a daunting costume to have created.

Each judge will provide a score out of 10; Ambition has a weighting of 10% for the final score.

Construction

The construction score reflects how well made the costume is. The variety and difficulty of the techniques used to craft the costume and the mastery of those skills thereof is key to this score. Appropriate use of materials and how the Finalist takes advantage of their characteristics should also be considered, as should their resourcefulness. It is also important that the costume can withstand being worn and moved around in- this is not to say it cannot be delicate.

Note that deliberate weathering and distressing is itself a technique and should not be considered as 'wear and tear' when evaluating the robustness of the costume unless it has adversely affected the costume's integrity beyond the judges' expectations.

The following table has suggested considerations for judges when assessing scores for this category:

Score	Variety & Difficulty	Use of Materials	Movement & Robustness*
1-10	The costume showcases few different techniques or very basic techniques, at a beginner level of mastery.	The costume has very limited materials or they have been used in a poor way	The costume falls apart with movement or has extremely limited movement due to construction choices, or has excessive signs of wear and tear.
11-20	The costume showcases a fair number of techniques or a few more difficult techniques at a basic level of mastery.	The costume has some variety of materials but not all suitable for the intended purpose or not used in an appropriate way	The costume has pieces prone to coming loose when moving or has some restriction to movement due to construction choices, or shows some signs of wear and tear.
21-44	The costume showcases a fair number of techniques at a normal level of mastery.	The costume has good choice of materials, appropriate for the intended use and is resourceful	The costume can be moved in without any issues, all parts appear to be remaining in place and limited wear and tear

45-60	The costume showcases a fair number of advanced techniques perfectly, or a huge number of techniques at a good level of mastery.	The costume makes excellent use of materials and their characteristics and is resourceful	The costume can be moved in confidently, and shows negligible signs of wear
61-70	The costume showcases a huge number of techniques perfectly. The techniques used to construct the costume are mystifying to a layperson.	The costume makes excellent use of appropriate or resourceful materials, fully exploited to maximum potential	The costume is resistant to wear and tear and can be moved in very confidently.

Each judge will provide a Construction score out of 70 with due consideration to the elements above; Construction has a weighting of 70% for the final score.

*It is recommended that judges give lesser weight to robustness under most circumstances, and also consider the stresses that are involved with transporting the costume to the Final.

Stage Presentation

The stage presentation not only creates an incredible show for the audience but also allows the judges to properly assess the durability and movement of the costume in motion. All Finalists must present their costume on stage. While not scored, we encourage the Finalists to consider how to make use of the whole stage, showcase all of the costumes features and bring some characterization to their presentation for the audience.

Penalties

Examples include, but not limited to:

- Failure to provide required finals information by the deadline set by ReedPop will incur a three (3) point penalty per item, waived at ReedPop's discretion if the Finalist has positively and proactively engaged in communication about the delay.
- Disrupting the schedule or running orders during the Final may incur a discretionary penalty of up to ten (10) points or disqualification depending on the circumstances, degree of changes, and proactive communication with ReedPop staff. Examples include not being ready for judging at the start of the allocated judging slot and not being ready to go on stage in a timely manner.

APPENDIX B – Other costume considerations

3D Printing and other automated production tools

The use of 3D Print and other automated production tools is becoming increasingly accessible for cosplayers. These notes provide guidance for entrants and judges on how to approach these technologies uses in the Crown Championships.

All automated manufacture is accepted but significant costume pieces created in this way will only be judged on the steps that the entrant takes themselves.

Example: if the entrant presented a significant part of their costume that was a purchased and finished 3D print with no additional work done by themselves, this would be treated as a purchased item and not considered for scoring by the judges

If the model has been created by the entrant they should include details of the modelling process in their progress book for the judges to review and verify. These items will score more highly than purchased models due to the additional work carried out by the entrant.

Much like the use of commercial sewing patterns, it is permitted to use models created by someone else provided the original creator is disclosed and credited. It is also accepted that the creation of the item might be completed by an individual that owns the relevant tool (or in a maker space or similar). The finishing and final construction of such pieces must be completed by the entrant and they must be able to detail how this was done in order for the piece to be eligible for judging.

Passing off other creator's work as the entrant's own will be grounds for disqualification.

Notes on costume 'Accuracy'

With the explosion of pop culture in our everyday lives, the growth of social media and competitions such as the Cosplay Central Crown Championships existing on a very global scene it is important for prospective Finalists, and Partner Event organizers, to consider that the costumes will likely be seen by people from a vast range of cultures, both inside and outside the pop culture community. This appendix aims to help advise where difficulties can arise.

As outlined in Appendix A: "Finalists are expected to make use of makeup and shaping for their costumes where appropriate, but it is not a modelling contest, accuracy extends to the costume itself not the physical traits of the cosplayer wearing it. The spirit of the competition allows people to choose who or what they want to portray, according to their cosplay skills."

Judges are considering the craftsmanship put into the costume, not how much the Finalist looks like their chosen character. So, for example, it is not acceptable to penalize a Finalist if their body shape is different from their chosen character but they could be rewarded for sensible choices made in costume design and construction to better emulate the proportions of the character e.g. the use of padding underlayers or clever tailoring. Similarly, good use of makeup for age or gender transformations can be rewarded but not penalized if these techniques are not employed.

The use of makeup, including prosthetics, to change your natural skin tone or features to that of another realistic race has been a contentious topic for a number of years in the global cosplay community. While not usually intended to cause offence, using makeup in this way carries connotations of historical practices that were inherently racist and it contributes to an environment where people of color are made to feel uncomfortable to portray characters outside their race, and it is not appropriate for the competition.

By understanding that costume accuracy does not include skin colour, age, gender or body shape, we include and invite everyone to portray any character that they love.

Prospective Finalists are invited to seek advice at the earliest moment from the ReedPop team if they are at all concerned that their choice of character or costume design could be considered offensive in any way.