

Competition Rules

These rules govern eligibility, team participation, project development, permitted tools and data, submissions, judging, and competition integrity for IQIC.

ELIGIBILITY Ages 13-18	FORMAT Worldwide, online	TEAMS 1-4 students
BUILD WINDOW 96 hours	ENTRY FEE Free	DATES Dec 18-22, 2026

Core requirement

The submitted project must be substantially created during the official 96-hour competition window and must represent the work of the registered team.

01 Agreement to the rules

By registering for, participating in, or submitting to IQIC, participants agree to follow these rules, the Participant Code of Conduct, and current event instructions published by IQIC.

02 Eligibility

IQIC is open to students ages 13-18 worldwide. Every person listed as a team member on the final submission must meet the age requirement for the competition.

03 Individual participation

Students may participate independently. School sponsorship, school affiliation, or participation through an official school team is not required unless a participant's own school or local rules require it.

Registration, Teams & Participation

01 Team size

Teams may include one to four eligible students. Cross-school and cross-country teams are permitted.

02 Registering before a team is final

Participants may register before finalizing their team. The team identified on the final project submission is the team evaluated for that submission, and every listed member must be eligible.

03 Team contributions

Each person listed as a team member should have made a genuine contribution to the submitted project. Teams must accurately represent who performed the work and may not list individuals who did not materially participate.

04 Outside advice and feedback

Teams may use public documentation, tutorials, educational resources, and general feedback from mentors, teachers, peers, or other people. Work submitted as the team's own must still be completed by the team or through tools permitted by these rules.

05 Communication with IQIC

Participants are responsible for reviewing competition communications and ensuring that registration and submission information is accurate and current. IQIC may contact teams when clarification is needed for eligibility, access, judging, or integrity review.

One team, one accountable submission

The team is responsible for the accuracy, legality, accessibility, and integrity of everything included in its submission, including material created with AI or third-party services.

Build Window, Prior Work & Project Scope

01 Official build window

The competition begins December 18, 2026 at 5:00 PM EST and ends December 22, 2026 at 5:00 PM EST. Equivalent times are 2:00 PM PST, 22:00 UTC, and 23:00 CET.

02 Substantial new work

The project submitted to IQIC must be substantially created during the official build window. A finished or substantially complete project created before the event may not be presented as new competition work.

03 Permitted prior work

Teams may reuse general-purpose code, libraries, frameworks, APIs, datasets, design systems, development tools, templates, and reusable infrastructure that existed before the event.

Prior work is permitted when it functions as a building block rather than the completed competition project.

04 Disclosure of prior work

If pre-existing code, infrastructure, research, designs, or other material make a substantial contribution to the final project, the team should identify that material in its submission and explain what was newly built during the 96-hour window.

05 Project scope

Projects must have a meaningful connection to finance, investing, markets, financial decision-making, or the technology and infrastructure that support them. There is no required programming language, platform, asset class, or technical approach.

06 Build deadline

Material feature development ends when the official build window closes. After the deadline, teams may not add features, materially improve results, or replace substantive portions of the submitted project.

Tools, AI, Data & Safe Demonstration

01 AI tools

AI tools are permitted for coding, research, debugging, design, ideation, writing, analysis, and other build tasks. Teams remain responsible for the accuracy, originality, safety, and legality of the final submission and must be able to explain the work they present.

02 AI disclosure

Teams must disclose significant AI use, including the tools used and the material role those tools played in the project. Routine spellcheck, basic autocomplete, or similar incidental assistance does not need to be itemized unless IQIC requests clarification.

03 External software and services

Public APIs, open-source software, third-party platforms, libraries, frameworks, and hosted services are permitted. Teams are responsible for complying with applicable licenses, terms of service, access restrictions, and usage limits.

04 Data

Teams may use public data and data they are authorized or licensed to use. Stolen, unlawfully obtained, confidential, or unauthorized private data is not permitted.

05 Privacy and credentials

A submission must not require judges to provide banking credentials, brokerage credentials, passwords, API secrets, private financial records, or other sensitive personal information in order to evaluate the project.

06 Financial-system demonstrations

Projects involving trading, payments, brokerage systems, or other financial transactions should be demonstrated using simulations, paper trading, sandbox environments, test networks, or other safe methods where practical. Judges should not be required to move real funds or authorize real financial transactions.

Submission Requirements & Deadline

Submissions are collected through Devpost. A submission is complete only when the required material is provided by the official deadline and judges can reasonably review the project.

01 Required submission material

- Project title and concise project description
- Demo video, maximum 3 minutes
- Working project link, repository, or executable demonstration where applicable
- Brief explanation of what was built during the 96-hour window
- Disclosure of significant AI use and major third-party tools, APIs, libraries, or datasets

02 Accuracy of the demo

The demo must fairly represent the submitted project. Edited video is allowed for clarity and pacing, but teams may not fabricate functionality, results, tests, or interactions that the submitted project cannot actually perform.

03 Access for judging

Where a project requires restricted access, teams must provide the instructions or credentials reasonably necessary for judging before the deadline. Access information should be limited to the project and must not expose unrelated private systems or accounts.

04 Deadline

Submissions must be completed by the official closing time. Late or materially incomplete submissions may be deemed ineligible.

05 Technical corrections after submission

IQIC may allow a limited correction when a submitted link, deployment, or file is inaccessible because of a technical issue. Any correction must preserve the substance of the project as it existed at the deadline and may not add features or improve judged content.

Ownership, Integrity, Judging & Administration

01 Ownership

Teams retain ownership of the projects they create. By submitting, teams grant IQIC permission to display the project name, description, screenshots, demo materials, team results, and related competition materials for event administration, reporting, and promotion.

02 Competition integrity

Participants may not plagiarize; submit work they did not substantially create; misrepresent team contributions, results, or capabilities; falsify eligibility or submission information; interfere with another team or event infrastructure; or violate applicable law or third-party rights.

03 Judging

Eligible projects are evaluated on Execution (30%), Originality (25%), Financial Relevance (20%), Analytical Depth (15%), and Communication (10%). The detailed rubric is published in the IQIC Judging Criteria & Final Round guide.

04 Final round

Approximately 8-10 teams may be invited to the live final round. Finalists receive 5 minutes for a project demonstration followed by up to 5 minutes of judge Q&A. The same published rubric applies.

05 Integrity review and enforcement

IQIC may request reasonable information needed to verify eligibility, authorship, project timing, tool use, data provenance, or other integrity questions. Violations may result in warnings, removal of material, loss of eligibility, disqualification, or other proportionate action.

06 Administrative decisions

IQIC may make reasonable determinations on eligibility, submissions, judging administration, integrity, scheduling, and circumstances not expressly addressed by these rules. Material event changes will be published through official IQIC channels.

Questions and current rules

The current public version of these rules and event information is published at iqic.org. Questions may be sent to hello@iqic.org.