

Anime Los Angeles Masquerade Official Rules

Welcome to the Anime Los Angeles Masquerade! We're excited you've chosen to take part in our show. Please read the following document and familiarize yourself with our rules.

Please remember, by respecting the rules and procedures of this competition, you help ensure that everyone receives equal and fair treatment. We want to give stage time to as many contestants as we can support, while attempting to provide a fair and safe environment in which to compete.

If you violate any of these rules, you may be disqualified and/or removed from the competition.

Basic Information

The Anime Los Angeles Masquerade is a skit and walk-on competition for showcasing costumes and performance talent, open to cosplayers of all ages, levels, and abilities.

For any questions, comments, issues, or problems, please contact the Masquerade Coordinator at masquerade@animelosangeles.org.

The Masquerade Coordinator and staff have the final say on rules. Failure to comply may result in disqualification.

Anime Los Angeles is not responsible for any damage or loss to a prop or costume brought on-site.

COVID-19 ADDENDUM: Animé Los Angeles strives, first and foremost, to be a safe and enjoyable event for all attendees, contestants, guests, and staff. As such, all contestants, guests, and staff participating in the Masquerade will be required to adhere to the rules of Animé Los Angeles.

Animé Los Angeles is keeping an eye on the situation and is committed to following requirements of state and local authorities, this may result in restrictions that will be announced as soon as possible.

Failure to adhere to these rules will result in immediate disqualification.

Entry Registration & Group Size

All contestants **must** possess an Anime Los Angeles badge.

Groups may have up to 8 members, including both presenters and ninjas. Larger groups may be allowed on a case-by-case basis at the Coordinator's discretion.

Each presenter may only appear on stage in a single entry.

Only contestants performing on stage are allowed backstage. Contestants with large or unwieldy costumes and contestants who need additional assistance backstage are allowed to bring one (1) handler. Parents may accompany participants aged 14 and under.

Applications open **October 1**, and will be accepted until **November 15**, or until **60 application entries** are submitted, whichever comes first. Registration is online only; on-site entries will no longer be accepted. We suggest entrants apply as early as possible to ensure their place in our show!

While we **ONLY** require contestant information to reserve a place in our show, please be aware that the following will be required no later than **December 15, 2021**:

- At least two (2) progress pictures of each costume being entered
- An approved audio file
- A dialogue script or performance summary of the content being presented
- Preliminary tech preferences (Scripts, Performance Details)

Please note that progress pictures must clearly show the work in progress on the costumes being entered. Finished cosplays may be entered; pictures of the work in progress must still be submitted. Entries that require extra time to submit these documents must notify the coordinators in writing before the due date.

Time Commitment

Participating in a Masquerade requires time commitment both outside the show and at the con itself. Be prepared to devote the necessary time at-con to attending judging sessions, tech rehearsal, and pre-show meetings. You may need to miss panels or workshops in order to compete, so please plan ahead and prioritize your time accordingly.

Each entry choosing to undergo craftsmanship judging will sign up for a judging timeslot via the online form sent to approved entries before the convention. Time slots are available both Friday and Saturday of the convention. Backstage judging will be only granted on a case-by-case basis to large groups, groups with unwieldy costumes, or groups who cannot make earlier appointments due to extenuating circumstances. If you miss your judging timeslot without notifying us beforehand, your entry will be disqualified.

Tech rehearsal is **required** for all contestants. **All members of your entry must attend.** Costumes and props are not mandatory, though we recommend bringing all large props and backdrops on stage to practice with them. Each group is allowed 1 practice performance on stage. If you miss your tech rehearsal time slot without notifying us beforehand, your entry will be disqualified.

Content & Performance

All solo entries are granted **60 seconds** on stage. All entries with 2 or more participants are granted **2 minutes and 30 seconds** of performance. You may use less time, but if you exceed the limit, you will be ineligible for any award. Additional time for large groups or Exhibition entries will be given on a case-by-case basis.

The time limits detailed above apply only to each entry's performance. Entries may use up to 1 minute to set up for their performance on stage, and 1 minute to break down after their performance. Entries requiring more set-up/break-down time must contact the Coordinator for approval.

Costumes and content must be rated PG. Nudity and sexually explicit content is strictly unallowed. All costumes must be beach legal, and skits should not include overt sexuality or strong language. Remember: there are children in the audience!

In the case of a technical issue or unexpected interruption to an entry's performance, each entry is allowed one "reset" and may start their performance over from the beginning.

No live animals are allowed on stage or in the backstage area except for trained service animals.

No materials or effects that will leave a mess on stage, in the green room, or on another contestant's costume are allowed (this includes glitter, confetti, streamers, silly string, fake blood, etc).

No pyrotechnics or any other sorts of open flame are allowed.

All weapons must follow the convention's weapons policy. No real firearms or projectile weapons are allowed on stage. No metal blades are allowed, regardless of whether they are dull or live. Any functional bows must be unstrung.

Contestants may only enter or exit the stage at the designated locations. Jumping off or otherwise exiting the stage at any other location is not allowed.

All unusual parts of your skit (including planned falls, costume changes, empty stage time, or other special effects) must be reviewed by Masquerade staff before the show.

If a member of Masquerade staff determines that an aspect of your performance may pose a danger to yourself, other performers, the audience, or ALA Volunteers or Staff, you may be asked to remove that aspect from your performance. For example: a backflip near the entry stairs, throwing a ball at another performer.

If your performance features complex special effects and/or stunts, you must demonstrate that you are able to successfully perform the effects and/or stunts during tech rehearsal. If you cannot, you may be asked to remove the item in question from your performance.

If your costume or prop has flashing lights, please notify the Coordinator in advance. A short warning will be read to the audience before your entry to protect those affected by flashing lights.

If you're going to have large props or plan to pre-set or leave things on stage, Anime Los Angeles can provide you with ninjas. Anime Los Angeles ninjas are **not** part of your skit and cannot participate other than setting things up and taking them away. If that's all you need a ninja to do, we highly prefer you use our ninjas. However, if you need a ninja for something more complex (such as assisting with quick changes or manipulating props during your performance), you must provide your own ninja. Our ninjas will also pick up things that are accidentally dropped, as well as assist contestants up and down the stage stairs.

Contestant provided backdrops must be pivotal to your skit (i.e., your skit cannot function without it). You may not use a backdrop if its only purpose is to add ambience. However, if your backdrop hides a quick change or a surprise character or prop, etc., it may be used with prior approval from the coordinator. Your group must be able to carry your backdrop upstairs onto the stage and it must be able to stand by itself, unless your group has assigned backdrop ninjas to hold it. Your backdrop must be present at tech rehearsal. Backdrops may not be larger than 8x8ft.

If you think you will have difficulty getting on and off stage, please let the Coordinator know, and they will assign a staff member to assist you during the show. You may also bring one (1) handler backstage to assist you with your costume. Our stage is equipped with a motorized lift.

For audio tracks, we accept only audio files in .mp3, .wav, or other audio format on USB drive (AKA thumb/flash drive). We **do not** accept CDs, Audacity/Garageband projects, or movie files. Audio files must be under 10 MB. We cannot play or rip music off of phones or portable MP3 players. Contestants are responsible for the quality of their audio file.

You will not have access to a microphone. During presentations, the MC is the only person with a microphone. Spoken narrative should be pre-recorded or provided as a script for the MC. We recommend the free programs Audacity or Garageband for recording and mixing Masquerade audio files.

MC scripts read before, during, and/or after your entry are limited to 70 words each. Submitted scripts that are longer than 70 words will be returned to the entry for editing.

Competition Judging

Entries may elect to be judged on craftsmanship, performance, or both. Entries that do not wish to be entered into competition, but would like to perform in Masquerade, must enter as Exhibition entries.

Exhibition entries are ineligible to win awards or prizes. Additionally, Exhibition entries may surpass the time limit for performances with approval from the Coordinator.

Judges will assign numerical scores based on Craftsmanship (Accuracy, Cleanliness, Difficulty, Attention to Detail, and Documentation) and Performance (Entertainment Value, Stage Presence, and Characterization). These scores are meant to cut down on wait time for contestants and audience during the show's halftime, and are **NEVER** a final indicator of placement or award, merely a basis for the judges to begin discussion.

If you think a personal or business relationship with a judge will make it difficult for the judge to be objective, please talk to the Coordinator. They will consult with the judging panel and come up with a reasonable course of action.

All awards are given at the discretion of the judges. We will always listen to the concerns of our cosplayers, but the decisions of our judges are final.

For our awards structure, please see the end of this document.

Costumes & Craftsmanship Judging

Craftsmanship judging is not required, but is encouraged. You may elect to have only a part of your costume judged, such as a prop or wig, and members of a group may be judged separately.

Documentation is required and should contain at least one picture of the character or prop you have recreated. You may also include progress pictures, alternate angles, or screenshots from the source. Documentation should be printed, and should not exceed more than five pages. Do not bring digital copies of your documentation for display on a computer or mobile device. We cannot print your documentation for you.

While we will make an effort to return your documentation to you, we are not liable for any reference books or other valuable materials that are not picked up by the end of the convention.

Purchased “complete” and rented costumes may not be entered. Costumes that have been assembled (i.e. “closet cosplay”) or altered in a significant way may be entered. You may credit the maker of your costume if they have an Anime Los Angeles badge, and they will be the recipient of any Craftsmanship awards.

Costumes that have won a major award at any costume contest are not eligible for competition and must be entered as Exhibition. Intentional omission of a costume’s award history will result in immediate disqualification and a minimum 1-year suspension from entry into the ALA Masquerade. If you are unsure if your entry will be affected by this rule, please contact the Coordinator in advance.

Craftsmanship Division Placement

Entries will be placed in the Novice, Journeyman, or Master Division for craftsmanship judging. **A group entry will be placed in the craftsmanship division appropriate for its most experienced member.** These divisions are designed to promote fair competition among equals, and judging will be conducted amongst a division’s members, not against all entries in the competition.

For craftsmanship division placement, **only** awards specifically granted for excellence or accomplishment in craftsmanship are counted. For example, a cosplayer who has won Best Journeyman Performance at Anime Expo would still be allowed to compete in the Novice Craftsmanship Division if their award history met the requirements listed below.

At the judges discretion, you may be promoted to a higher division. Promotion is rare, and will **ONLY** occur if the contestant's entry shows skill and work well above the level they've entered, **AND** the entry is winning an award in the higher division.

Any competitor may enter in a higher division than they are placed.

Any person who made more than half of their annual income from costuming in any of the last 5 years qualifies as a "professional."

San Diego Comic-Con, FanimeCon, and AnimeExpo are considered major competitions, while SacAnime, Anime Banzai, and Anime California are considered local competitions.

If you’re not sure whether you should consider a past competition to be a major regional competition or a local competition, please ask the Coordinator. The size of the event and number of contestants in the competition will be considered.

Examples of major awards include Best in Division and Best in Show. Examples of minor awards include Runner-Up in Division and Honorable Mention.

Any questions about craftsmanship division placement should be brought to the Coordinator for discussion.

MASTER

- Any individual may enter.

JOURNEYMAN

- No professional costumers.
- No individuals who have won:

- Any award in the Master division at a major or local competition.
- One or more major awards in Journeyman or equivalent at a major competition.
- Three or more minor awards in Journeyman or equivalent at major and minor competitions.

NOVICE

- No professional costumers.
- No individuals who have won:
 - One or more awards of any kind at a major competition.
 - One or more major award at a local competition.
 - Three or more minor awards at a local competition.

EXHIBITION

- Any individual may enter.
- Entries are not eligible to win awards or prizes.

Performance Judging

Starting in 2021, Anime Los Angeles Masquerade entries will be judged on performance by the type of performance, not by competition skill level.

Each entry will be sorted into one of the four categories below based upon the content of the performance presented in the entry. Prior performance award history and craftsmanship division do not impact category placement.

- **Comedy**
 - A performance that strives, first and foremost, to make the audience laugh.
- **Drama**
 - A performance that presents a serious or emotional narrative.
- **Musical/Dance**
 - A performance that presents a song and/or dance routine. This includes both original routines and recreations of routines from existing works.
- **Walk-On**
 - A performance solely for exhibiting the costume. Walk-ons may include poses, movement, some dialogue, and music.
 - Solo entries that wish to exhibit a comedic, dramatic, or musical/dance performance will be assigned to the category best suited for their entry.

Entries will be judged against other entries in the same performance category.

Each entry's performance must be presented for the first time at Anime Los Angeles. Performances that have been presented at another convention, competition, or performance venue, including virtual or digital, are disqualified from competing and must be entered as Exhibition. Intentional omission of an act's previous performance history will result in immediate disqualification and a minimum 1-year suspension from entry into the ALA Masquerade. If you are unsure if your entry will be affected by this rule, please contact the Coordinator in advance.

Award Structure

Best in Show: Showcases the best overall balance of both Craftsmanship and Performance.

Craftsmanship

Master: Best Craftsmanship

Master: Runner-up Craftsmanship

Journeyman: Best Craftsmanship

Journeyman: Runner-up Craftsmanship

Novice: Best Craftsmanship

Novice: Runner-up Craftsmanship

Performance

Best Drama

Runner-up Drama

Best Comedy

Runner-up Comedy

Best Musical/Dance

Runner-up Musical/Dance

Best Walk-on

Runner-up Walk-on

Additional Awards

Additional awards for excellence deserving recognition may be given at the judges' discretion.

Judge's Choice for...

Honorable Mention for...