

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 providing 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 concerns, 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.

Entry Submission & Participants

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

All contestants **must** sign a Masquerade Release Form at the convention prior to participating in the Masquerade. This release form confirms contestant understanding of the official rules, releases Anime Los Angeles from liability for injuries or accidents on stage, and allows Anime Los Angeles to use and publish photographs of the contestant's presentation.

Groups may have up to 10 members, including both costumed and non-costumed performers. Larger groups may be allowed on a case-by-case basis at the Coordinator's discretion.

Each contestant 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. Contestants under the age of 14 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Please email the Masquerade Coordinator in advance to notify us of any handlers or guardians so we can ensure there will be enough seating for your group.

Submissions open **October 1 at 8:00 PM Pacific Time (Los Angeles)**, and will be accepted until **October 15**, or until **45 application entries** are submitted, whichever comes first. We suggest entrants apply as early as possible to ensure their place in our show!

After **45** entries are submitted, all remaining entries will be placed on our **waitlist**. Our waitlist has a cap of 25.

We do not accept entries in-person at the convention. All entries must be submitted via the form on the Anime Los Angeles website.

While we **ONLY** require contestant and entry information to reserve a place in our show, please be aware that the following will be required no later than **December 15, 2023**:

- 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

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. Entries that fail to submit these materials without notifying us of any delays will be removed from the Masquerade.

If a spot in the Masquerade opens, we will contact the next entry on the waitlist. Entries must respond within 48 hours after being contacted to confirm their interest in participating in the Anime Los Angeles Masquerade. If they do not respond within 48 hours, they forfeit the open spot to the next waitlisted entry and be removed from the waitlist. After confirming participation, entries will need to provide the materials above as soon as possible.

Any remaining entries on the waitlist will be contacted by December 20th, 2023 to inform them the show is full.

Entries that register for the Masquerade and submit all required materials and forms, but miss roll call for the required pre-show meeting, fail to attend their craftsmanship or tech rehearsal slot, or do not appear for the Masquerade show without notifying the Masquerade Coordinator of their absence in advance (“no-call, no-show”) will be blacklisted from the Anime Los Angeles Masquerade for a minimum of one year.

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 only be 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.** Tech rehearsals take place on Saturday morning and afternoon. You do not need to be in costume. Groups with large props or backdrops **must** bring them to tech rehearsal to ensure the prop can be safely stored, transported, and used. Each group is allowed up to five minutes on stage to rehearse. If you miss your tech rehearsal time slot without notifying us beforehand, your entry will be disqualified.

A pre-show meeting will take place on Saturday morning. Attendance is **mandatory**; at least one member of your entry must attend. During the meeting, we will confirm attendance for all entries, reveal the show run order,

introduce Masquerade staff and our judges, review the day's schedule and call times, and give helpful information about what to expect before, during, and after the show.

Content & Performance

Solo entries presenting a **walk-on** are granted **30 seconds** on stage. Solo entries presenting a Comedy, Drama, or Dance performance are granted **1 minute and 30 seconds**.

All entries with 2 or more participants are granted **2 minutes and 30 seconds** of performance, and entries with 5 or more participants are granted **3 minutes** of performance.

Additional time for Exhibition entries will be given on a case-by-case basis.

Note that entries do not have to use the full time allotted. Use your time on stage wisely to best showcase your hard work and impress the audience.

Entries that exceed the time limit will be ineligible for any award.

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.

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.

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

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, water, etc).

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

All props must follow the convention's [props policy](#). All prop weapons must be peace-bonded by Con Ops before craftsmanship judging and the Masquerade. 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 performance (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 costume or 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 entry. For example: a backflip near the stairs, throwing a ball, a costume with unsealed makeup, or unbalanced stilts.

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 assistance. Anime Los Angeles volunteers are **not** part of your skit and cannot participate other than setting things up and taking them away. If that's all you need someone to do, we highly prefer you use one of our volunteers. However, if you need someone to do something more complex (such as assisting with quick changes or manipulating props during your performance), you must bring your own assistant. Our volunteers 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 onto the stage, and it must be able to stand by itself, unless there will be a person holding it at all times. Your backdrop must be present at tech rehearsal. Backdrops may not be larger than 8x8ft.

All costumes must be able to fit or be maneuvered through a standard ADA doorway (32 inches wide, 80 inches tall). Costumes should not significantly inhibit the cosplayer's ability to navigate on stage or in low lighting. Cosplayers may need to stand or sit in the stage wings for up to 5 minutes while waiting to perform; accommodations will be provided to those who require them.

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. The Terrace Theater is equipped with a large freight elevator to transport performers from green room to stage level. There are no stairs between the elevator and the stage.

Audio

For audio tracks, we accept only audio files in .mp3 or .wav. We **do not** accept Audacity/Garageband projects, movie files, YouTube links, etc. Audio files must be under 10 MB and must be cut to competition length before submission.

Audio files must be sent to the Masquerade Staff by the deadline stated above. We cannot play music off of phones or other devices. We will not accept audio files at the convention.

Contestants are responsible for the quality of their audio file. We recommend playing your audio on a speaker or television to ensure it sounds the way you intend it to sound on the theater's large speakers.

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.

Lighting

The ALA Masquerade is proud to provide our entries with the ability to design the lighting for their performance. Our professional techs will take your ideas and use them to make your entry shine even more brilliantly on our stage!

Custom lighting is optional for all performance entries (Comedy, Drama, Dance). Walk-On entries and entries that do not request custom lighting will receive Standard lighting (warm white lights).

The Coordinator will send a submission form to approved entries in late December with detailed instructions on the submission of lighting requests. All lighting requests must be submitted via this form.

An entry's choice of lighting will not impact their Performance judging result. Custom lighting is a special courtesy we offer to give entries more control over their presentation and heighten the quality of our show.

While we strive to honor each entry's choice of lighting, and will do our best to execute your instructions to the letter, we cannot make any guarantees as to the color, accuracy of timing, or feasibility of lighting requests. Due to time restrictions or technical difficulties, we may simplify your instructions or use Standard lighting for your performance. Entries will always be notified of any lighting changes before their performance.

If you have questions about lighting requests, please contact the Masquerade Coordinator.

Long Beach Terrace Theater

We are excited to bring the Anime Los Angeles Masquerade to the Long Beach Terrace Theater, an incredible venue who's hosted the likes of Broadway productions, symphonies, operas, comedians, and rock stars! Let's treat our host theater with the pride and respect it deserves and ensure it stays our home for the next ALA.

Immediately before and during the Masquerade, contestants must stay in the Green Room or the adjacent hallway area unless escorted by Masquerade Staff. The Green Room will have seating (chairs and stools), restrooms exclusively for Masquerade participants, and a video and audio monitor of the stage above for viewing performances. The hallway will host our catering spread and official photographer, as well as additional seating.

All contestants will be escorted to and from stage by Masquerade Staff. Contestants are not allowed in the access hallways, dressing rooms, offices, or other backstage areas without a Staff escort.

Contestants must treat all Terrace Theater employees, such as theater ushers, tech crew, and backstage staff, with courtesy and respect.

Any messes, spills, or damage to Terrace Theater surfaces or property must be reported immediately to Masquerade Staff.

In accordance with [Anime Los Angeles' Non-Harassment Policy](#), any action or behavior that causes significant interference with convention operations or adversely affects the convention's relationship with the Terrace Theater is strictly forbidden and may result in removal from the Masquerade competition and/or a lifetime ban from the Anime Los Angeles Masquerade.

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.

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, but doing so may not grant you as high of a chance of award as being judged for a full head-to-toe costume.

For group craftsmanship entries, you will be placed at the level of the highest ranking craftsman in your group (ex: In a group of 2 Journeymen and a Master, the entire group would be entered as Master). You may choose to exclude members from the judge's craftsmanship scoring, but we cannot judge multiple members of a group as separate entries.

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 double-sided pages per judged costume. 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, Sakura-Con, and AnimeExpo are considered major competitions, while SacAnime, Anime Banzai, and Fanime are considered local competitions.

If you're not sure whether you should consider a past competition to be a major competition or a local competition, please ask the Coordinator. The size of the event, judges for the competition, 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 awards 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

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. Judges will consider originality, comedic value, and execution.
- **Drama**
A performance that presents a serious or emotional narrative. Judges will consider originality, emotional impact, and execution.
- **Dance**
A performance that presents a song and dance routine. This includes both original routines and recreations of routines from existing works. Judges will consider stage presence, difficulty of routine, and execution.
- **Walk-On**
A performance solely for exhibiting the costume. Walk-ons may include poses, movement, and music. Judges will consider stage presence, characterization, and execution. Solo entries that wish to exhibit a comedic, dramatic, or dance performance should enter the category best suited for their entry.

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

Any questions about performance category should be brought to the Coordinator for discussion.

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

Overall

Best in Show

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...