

Conditions of Participation Deutscher Computerspielpreis 2026

On behalf of the **holders of the Deutscher Computerspielpreis**,

- the **Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space, and**
- the **game – the German Games Industry Association e.V.**

the award office Deutscher Computerspielpreis calls

- developers and publishers of high-quality computer games made in Germany as well as
- developers and publishers of high-quality international games, and
- pupils, students, and junior developers who have created a game prototype,

in the period from **January 5th , 2026 to January 23rd , 2026** to propose their games or prototypes for an award.

Furthermore, everyone can make a proposition for the categories Player of the Year and Studio of the Year from **January 5th , 2026 to January 30th , 2026**.

1. Award Office

The award office provides comprehensive support and advice to entrants on all questions relating to submission to the German Computer Games Award.

AWARDBÜRO DEUTSCHER COMPUTERSPIELPREIS

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2. Bewerbungsberechtigte Spiele

The following admission requirements must be fulfilled for a prize to be awarded:

First admission requirement:

- In the national categories (see Section III, Categories 1 to 11), games can be submitted which have been developed predominantly in Germany, i.e. as a rule at least 80% of them. This is affirmed in lieu of oath by the submitter(s). The award office will implement a plausibility check.
- In the international categories (see Section III, Category 12), games may be submitted which have appeared internationally, or which will appear in accordance with the provisions listed below, but have not been developed predominantly in German.

Second admission requirement: Ensuring the protection of minors

Every winning title of Deutscher Computerspielpreis needs to have an age rating from the Entertainment Software Self-Regulation (USK). Nominees in the category 'Best Family Game' need to have an age rating of 0+, 6+ or 12+.

USK assumes the function of youth protection partner of Deutscher Computerspielpreis.

- In case of winning titles without an age rating, USK issues an age rating free of charge.
- In case of the nominees of the category 'Best Family Game' without an age rating, USK issues an age rating free of charge.
- The award office submits the titles in question to the USK for review in good time before the nomination or award is announced and informs the submitter of the age rating after the nomination or award has been announced.
- It is up to the USK to decide which kind of age rating (IARC rating or age rating according to German Youth Protection Act) is apt.

3. Prize Categories

The German Computer Games Award is awarded in the following **prize categories**:

1. Best German Game
2. Best Family Game
3. Young Talent Award Best Debut
4. Young Talent Award Best Prototype
5. Best Innovation and technology
6. Best Game Design
7. Best Audio design
8. Best Graphic design
9. Best Story
10. Best Serious Game
11. Best Mobile Game
12. Best International Game (without endowment)
13. Player of the Year (without endowment)
14. Studio of the Year
15. Special Jury Prize

The definitions of the price categories can be found online at www.deutscher-computerspielpreis.de/the-award/kategorien/?lang=en.

4. Submission of Computer Games

A game may only be submitted once for the Deutscher Computerspielpreis.

In principle, platform ports are exempt from being submitted a second time. Exceptions can be accepted by the award office, if the port offers aspects of gameplay, depiction, controls and/or game experience that merit re-assessment by the jury.

Add-ons / Downloadable Contents (DLC), which extend the action and/or equipment possibilities of a game more than only insignificantly, may be submitted.

The submission of a game in several categories is permitted.

The submission must be received in complete by the award office by January 23rd, 2026. If copies and/or documents are sent by post, the postmark will be valid. Late submissions can be accepted by the award office only as an exception after prior consultation.

Only natural and legal persons who are entitled to the rights of use required for submission are entitled to submit entries. The submission and the procedure are carried out in German or English.

Digital games that have been released or will be released after the end of the submission phase of the previous award period and no later than the day of the award ceremony of this year's award can be submitted. **For clarification: the release date of the game must be between January 17th, 2025 and April 29th, 2026.**

Games in Early Access or Open Beta Phase can be submitted as well. Accordingly, they are exempt from later re-submission. It is up to the submitting party to decide at which development stage to submit their game(s).

If a game has not been completed until the relevant jury meeting, it must be in a sufficiently playable and assessable condition at that time. This will be assessed by the award office. If the submitted title is not sufficiently suitable for assessment, the award office will seek an advisory discussion with the submitters and, if necessary, postpone the game by mutual agreement for the following award period (DCP 2027) if no technically satisfactory solution can be found. In addition, the expert jury is free to defer a title that has not yet been sufficiently completed for evaluation to a possible submission in the following award period. The title is therefore deemed not to have been submitted, so that the ban on multiple submissions does not apply in this case.

The submission is made using a tool available online at deutscher-computerspielpreis.de. Submitters first set up a user account. In a second step, a series of information and assets about the game are queried, which can be made available directly online.

A submission must be justified in each case to facilitate a comprehensible selection process. The reasons should refer to the category definition (www.deutscher-computerspielpreis.de/the-award/kategorien/?lang=en).

In the category "Best Innovation and Technology", in addition to games, other innovations and technologies can be submitted, provided the innovation originates in Germany and is related to computer games. **In these cases, it is mandatory to contact the award office to discuss the details of the submission.** For submissions in this category, the concrete innovation or technology must be described in all submissions to be considered by the jury.

The submission of games is free of charge. The award office must be provided with **eight copies of the submitted game per category per game (up to 40 in total)**.

Games are judged by a jury of four experts. Up to three games per category are nominated, i.e. they are proposed to the main jury for an award.

If a game is nominated, additional copies may be required for the main jury. The award office will contact the submitters of nominated games and request additional copies and/or codes.

At the end of the submission process, the submitter(s) must generate a PDF with the affidavit (can be found under the item "Affidavit"). This must be signed and sent to the award office by post or e-mail or uploaded via the submission tool by the closing date January 23rd, 2026. After submission, the affidavit can also be created again in the profile under "My submissions" for all submitted games.

Attention: **If the affidavit is missing, the submission is incomplete and cannot be considered.** Questions regarding the affidavit should be directed to the award office via mail or telephone.

5. Submission for the Young Talent Award: Best Debut

In principle, a game may only be submitted once for the award. The submission will be made using a tool available online at www.deutscher-computerspielpreis.de. Submitters will first set up a user account.

A debut game is a game of a developer who has brought a relevant game onto the market for the first time or whose game will be published by the day of the award ceremony (April 29th 2026) in accordance with the rules of the prize. The game does not have to be the very first game of the development team.

Otherwise, the general submission requirements for games are valid (see Section 4).

6. Submission for the Young Talent Award Best Prototype

Pupils and students of German educational institutions can submit prototypes in the category "Young Talent Award Best Prototype". Individuals as well as groups can submit entries. Company spin-offs of students as well as start-ups and hobbyists who have not yet published a game commercially may also submit entries. At least 80% of the prototype's must have been developed in Germany. Games which have been developed within the frame of one's studies are not presumed as "commercially published" in the above sense.

A prototype may only be submitted once. A prototype may, even if it has been awarded a prize in a previous year, be submitted once again as a *finished game* in a later year.

Submitted prototypes may not be published until the date of the award ceremony (April 29th, 2026) and may not be submitted as a finished game in any other category. However, common non-commercial publication of prototypes on platforms such as itch.io are permitted.

The submission of a prototype in the category Young Talent Award excludes the submission of games in other categories of the German Computer Games Award in the same award period. **For clarification: Whoever submits a prototype may not submit a game in another category in the same year and vice versa.**

The submission will be made using a tool available online at deutscher-computerspielpreis.de. Submitters will first set up a user account.

A playable prototype (as a **permanent** download link via Dropbox, Google Drive etc.) including installation instructions and a description of the game content must be submitted. Design and scope are optional.

The submission must be received in complete by the award office by January 23rd, 2026. If copies and/or documents are sent by post, the postmark will be valid. Late submissions can be accepted by the award office only as an exception after prior consultation.

Entrants in the category Young Talent Award: Best Prototype declare on an additional form (affidavit) and under oath that they have made the prototype by themselves and only with the help of the designated tools, and that all features/aspects of the prototype, which have been taken from either this way or from the sense of other available works, or have been generated using AI-tools, have been identified by accurate information.

Attention: If the affidavit is missing, the submission is incomplete and cannot be considered.
Questions regarding the affidavit should be directed to the award office by telephone.

Five projects will be nominated for the Young Talent Award Best Prototype and the winner will be awarded with prize money. The remaining four nominees will receive a nomination fee.

7. Proposal for Player of the Year

The prize without endowment "Player of the Year" is awarded to eSports Athletes, Let's Players or (ordinary) gamers who have distinguished themselves with special achievements. This can be a gaming performance, but also a commitment to the media games, the community or society in general. A clear relationship to computer and video games must be given.

For the category "Player of the Year", any person may submit reasoned proposals within the published submission deadline.

A complete proposal includes:

- Contact details of the proposer (for queries):
 - Name,
 - E-mail address
- Nominating of a Gamer of the Year:
 - Name or alias
 - Social media account(s), e.g.
 - Link to the performance(s) to be evaluated by the jury,
 - Justification for the proposal (at least 600 characters).

The award office provides a suitable suggestion tool for this on deutscher-computerspielpreis.de.

8. Proposal for Studio of the Year

The "Studio of the Year" award explicitly honors and focuses on the creative minds behind the games. The award-winning development studio is particularly convincing through its games – but (team) success, the commitment of the studio as a whole or a special studio achievement are also to be

honored. These can include, for example: quality as an employer, product success and quality, corporate development, innovation, social responsibility or social commitment (e.g. diversity, sustainability, promotion of young talent, education and training).

For the category "Studio of the Year", any person may submit reasoned proposals within the published submission deadline.

A complete proposal includes:

- Contact details of the proposer (for queries):
 - Name,
 - E-mail address
- Nominating of a Studio of the Year:
 - Name of the studio
 - Website of the studio
 - Social media account(s) [optional],
 - Link to the performance(s) to be evaluated by the jury,
 - Justification for the proposal (at least 600 characters).

The award office provides a suitable suggestion tool for this on www.deutscher-computerspielpreis.de.

9. Award Winners and Use of Prize Money

Award winners may be natural or legal persons. The prize and the associated prize money will be awarded to the developer and, if applicable, the publisher of the awarded game. The developer will receive 70% of the prize money and the publisher 30% of the prize money.

In the case of co-productions in which foreign developers or publishers are also involved, only the developer(s) or publisher(s), who are paying their taxes in Germany will receive the prize and the associated prize money. The exceptions are the international categories, where foreign developers or publishers can also receive prizes. However, these categories are not endowed.

The date of submission is decisive for the allocation of prize money between developer and publisher. Any existing co-publishers or co-developers must be notified to the award office at the time of submission. Parties that are added later, i.e. after submission, will not be considered for the awarding of the prize money.

For games, the prize money or nomination fees respectively will be paid out under the condition and subject to the following:

- the award-winner submits a declaration of commitment to the Federal Government by completing a form confirming that the prize money will be used in its entirety for the development of a new computer game within two years complying with the admission requirements and quality criteria of Deutscher Computerspielpreis, and
- the award-winner agrees in writing to provide the award office with a suitable proof of use for the prize money within six months after the end of the period of use or otherwise to reimburse it.

- The prize money or nomination fees are estimated to be paid based on the De-minimis-Directive (Directive No. 1407/2013 of the EU-Commission of December 18th, 2013 regarding the application of Articles 107, 108 of the EU-Contract with respect to De-minimis-subsidies) in the revised version published by the commission on December 13th 2023.

In the case of prototypes, the prize money or nomination fee will be paid out under the following conditions and proviso:

- the award-winner submits a declaration of commitment to the Federal Government by completing a form in which it is confirmed that the prize money will be used in its entirety for the implementation of the prototype or parts of it or for the development of a new, different computer game within two years and
- the award-winner agrees in writing to provide the award office with a suitable proof of use for the prize money within six months after the end of the period of use or otherwise to reimburse it.
- The prize money or nomination fees are estimated to be paid based on the De-minimis-Directive (Directive No. 1407/2013 of the EU-Commission of December 18th, 2013 regarding the application of Articles 107, 108 of the EU-Contract with respect to De-minimis-subsidies) in the revised version published by the commission on December 13th 2023.

As every year, the planned prize money is subject to the availability of the budgeted funds.

10. Award Ceremony

The award ceremony will be held on April 29th, 2026 in Munich.