IPSC IT FEST 2026

# Platform & Environment Specification

## *Hackathon*

*Sections 7, 8, 9, 12 and 17 of the Hackathon Rulebook*

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# 7. Building the Technology

7.1 Companies shall have flexibility in selecting programming languages, frameworks, development environments, databases, APIs, libraries, hardware components and other technologies, subject to the restrictions contained in this Rulebook.

7.2 Technology should be selected based on its suitability for the Problem Statement rather than complexity for its own sake.

7.3 Judges may ask participants to explain: why a particular technology was selected; how the system works; how data flows through the system; how hardware and software interact; how errors are handled; how the system could scale; what limitations exist; and how AI-assisted components function.

7.4 Companies should prioritise: reliability; usability; maintainability; performance; security where relevant; scalability; and demonstrable functionality.

7.5 The use of sophisticated technology shall not automatically result in a higher score. Technical complexity shall be rewarded only where it contributes meaningfully to the solution.

7.6 No programming language, framework, library or tool is prohibited by default. Any additional technical restriction will be communicated by the Organising Committee.

## 8. Hardware, Fabrication & Physical Prototypes

8.1 Companies may develop hardware-based or hardware-software solutions where appropriate to the Problem Statement. Hardware is optional.

8.2 Campus fabrication facilities, including 3D printing, may be made available for approved hardware development, to allow rapid prototyping of physical components.

8.3 Companies shall be responsible for ensuring that their hardware is operated safely.

8.4 Hardware components should be appropriately secured and assembled.

8.5 Exposed electrical connections, unsafe wiring, unstable structures or other hazardous construction may be prohibited from demonstration.

8.6 Companies shall not intentionally construct any component designed to: damage another Company's prototype; damage school property; interfere with another Company's equipment; cause injury; or disrupt the competition.

8.7 A hardware solution shall not automatically receive additional credit merely for containing physical components, and a software-only solution shall not be disadvantaged.

8.8 For a solution that does not require hardware, equivalent technical depth may be demonstrated through software engineering, architecture, algorithms, data systems, integration or other relevant technical implementation.

## 9. Artificial Intelligence & Assisted Development

9.1 The use of Artificial Intelligence tools is permitted, subject to the provisions of this section. Participants may bring and use their own laptops and other development devices throughout the even.

9.2 AI may be used for appropriate purposes including: brainstorming; research assistance; coding assistance; debugging assistance; design assistance; content generation; data analysis; interface development; and other legitimate development tasks.

9.3 Companies must maintain transparency regarding their use of AI.

9.4 Each Company shall disclose: the AI tools used; the purpose for which each tool was used; and the significant components of the final product that were AI-assisted.

9.5 AI assistance does not transfer responsibility for the resulting work away from the Company.

9.6 Every Company Member must be capable of demonstrating an appropriate understanding of the Company's final output, including significant AI-assisted components.

9.7 A participant may be asked by a judge to: explain AI-generated code; modify a relevant component; explain why an AI-generated approach was selected; identify limitations or errors in AI-generated material; or explain how the relevant component interacts with the remainder of the system.

9.8 The deliberate concealment of significant AI assistance may be treated as a rule violation.

9.9 Use of AI does not permit participants to introduce prohibited pre-built solutions into the competition.

## 12. Devices, Network & Digital Resources

12.1 Participants shall bring their own laptops as required for development. The Hackathon runs on participants' own machines.

12.2 Internet access shall be provided by the host school, subject to network availability and applicable restrictions.

12.3 Mobile phones and personal hotspots are prohibited during the competition, except where the Organising Committee expressly permits their use for a specific operational purpose.

12.4 Participants shall not use personal hotspots to circumvent school network restrictions.

12.5 Participants shall not attempt to interfere with: school networks; another Company's devices; competition systems; judging systems; or another Company's data.

12.6 Unauthorised access to another Company's files, code, accounts, devices or systems shall constitute a serious violation.

12.7 Campus fabrication resources, including 3D printing, are provided for hardware-based projects.

12.8 The online services reachable or blocked on the host network will be communicated by the Organising Committee.

# 17. Submission of the Final Solution

17.1 Every Company must submit its final work through the mechanism specified by the Organising Committee.

17.2 The final submission shall contain the components prescribed in the official Submission Specification.

17.3 The submission may include, as applicable: executable prototype/application; source code; hardware prototype; technical documentation; business strategy; financial model; marketing strategy; presentation; the submission shall include an AI-use declaration as required under Section 9.4, alongside the other applicable submission components specified in the official Submission Specification.

17.4 The exact submission format, file naming requirements, platform and deadline shall be communicated before the Development Period concludes.

17.5 A Company is responsible for ensuring that its submission is accessible, functional, complete, correctly labelled and submitted before the deadline.

17.6 Late submissions may be subject to penalties or may be rejected, according to the final submission policy. Submission format violations may likewise be penalised.