

The 3rd Universal Cup Finals Qualification Rule

Issued by the Scientific Committee (**SC**)
The Universal Cup

1 August 2025
Version 1.1

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Preamble

The present document establishes the official regulations (hereinafter "the Regulations") pertaining to the qualification and selection procedures for participation in the 3rd Universal Cup Finals (hereinafter "the Finals"). The Finals constitute the conclusive event of the third competition cycle of the Universal Cup.

These Regulations are adopted with the objective of ensuring a fair, transparent, and merit-based qualification process, while simultaneously recognizing the value of community contributions to the organization and success of the Universal Cup.

Competent Body

The following committees are entrusted with the oversight and execution of these Regulations:

The Scientific Committee (SC) is the principal body responsible for the implementation, interpretation, and oversight of these Regulations. Its composition is as follows:

- **Chair of SC:** Qingyu Shi
- **Deputy Chair of SC:** Lingyu Jiang
- **Members of SC:** Yuhao Du, Yaohui Zeng

The Technical Committee (TC) is the body responsible for advising and assisting the **SC** on all technical matters related to the implementation of these Regulations. Its composition is as follows:

- **Chair of TC:** Qingyu Shi
- **Members of TC:** Shengliang Cai, Lyuzhi Pan, Jie Tan

Interpretation

The final authority for the interpretation of these Regulations shall rest with the Scientific Committee. The decision of the **SC**, as articulated by **Chair of SC**, is final.

Definitions

For the purposes of these Regulations, the following definitions shall apply:

The Finals The final event of the 3rd Universal Cup season.

Online Stages The series of online contests held throughout The 3rd Universal Cup season.

The Semifinals The penultimate qualification contest for The 3rd Universal Cup Finals.

1 General Provisions

1.1 Scope

These regulations shall govern the qualification and selection process for all teams seeking to participate in the Finals. A minimum of twenty (20) teams shall be selected pursuant to the provisions herein.

1.2 Commencement of Procedures

The qualification and selection procedures for the Finals shall formally commence no later than three (3) calendar months prior to the scheduled commencement date of the Finals.

2 Qualification Mechanisms

The selection of participating teams shall be conducted through four distinct mechanisms, detailed in Parts I through IV of this Article.

2.1 Part I: Online Stage Qualification

2.1.1 Eligibility

The ten (10) highest-ranked teams on the official 3rd Universal Cup season rating leaderboard shall be extended invitations to the Finals. The final leaderboard must be officially published on the Universal Cup website and be confirmed by both the Chair of **SC** and the Chair of **TC**.

2.1.2 Tie-breaking Procedure

In the event that two or more teams possess identical final season ratings for the 10th qualification slot, the following procedure shall be applied sequentially until the tie is resolved:

1. The total number of problems solved by each tied team in the Semifinals shall be the primary criterion;
2. Should a tie persist, the total penalty time accrued by each team in the Semifinals shall be compared, with preference given to the team with the lower penalty time;
3. Should a tie persist, an additional play-off task shall be administered under the supervision of the **SC**, the results of which shall determine the ranking;
4. Should a tie persist, the final ranking shall be determined by a binding decision of the **SC**.

2.1.3 Reallocation of Vacated Slots

In the event that any team selected under this provision declines its invitation, the corresponding slot shall not be offered to the next team on the rating list. Instead, such vacated positions shall be subject to reallocation in accordance with the provisions of Part IV of this Section.

2.2 Part II: Semifinal Performance-Based Qualification

2.2.1 Eligibility

Eight (8) teams which have not qualified under Part I shall be selected based on their performance in The 3rd Universal Cup Semifinals. The performance of The 3rd Universal Cup Semifinals is based on the following criteria, as mentioned in The 3rd Universal Cup Semifinals Ranking rules.

2.2.2 Methodology and Tie-breaking Procedure

Selection shall be based on the final rankings of the Semifinals. In the event of a tie for the final qualification slot under this Part, the following procedure shall be applied sequentially until the tie is resolved:

1. The total number of problems solved by each tied team shall be the primary criterion;
2. Should a tie persist, the total penalty time accrued shall be compared, with preference given to the team with the lower penalty time;
3. Should a tie persist, the submission ID of the final accepted submission for each team shall be compared, with preference given to the team with the numerically lower submission ID;
4. Should a tie persist, the official season rating of each tied team, as determined at the conclusion of the Online Stages, shall be compared, with preference given to the team with the higher rating;
5. Should a tie persist, an additional play-off task shall be administered under the supervision of the **SC**, the results of which shall determine the ranking;
6. Should a tie persist, the final ranking shall be determined by a binding decision of the **SC**.

2.3 Part III: Community Contribution-Based Invitations

2.3.1 Purpose

Two (2) team invitations shall be reserved for individuals or teams that have rendered outstanding service to the Universal Cup community, in recognition of their contributions to the integrity and success of the competition.

2.3.2 Eligibility Criteria

The following categories of contribution shall be considered:

- Authorship of contests included in the 2nd or 3rd Universal Cup Online Stages;
- Service as problem setters, testers, or staff in The 2nd Universal Cup Semifinals, The 2nd Universal Cup Finals, or The 3rd Universal Cup Semifinals.
- Other demonstrable and significant contributions to the Universal Cup community, including but not limited to moderation, mentorship, and technical support.

2.3.3 Application Procedure

Eligible candidates must submit an application via electronic mail to `admin@ucup.ac` no later than 15 September 2025. Applications shall include:

1. The team name and Universal Cup account identifier (e.g., `ucup-teamXXXX`);
2. The full legal names of all team members;
3. A comprehensive description of the team’s contributions to the Universal Cup.

2.3.4 Evaluation Procedure

Applications shall be reviewed by the **SC** according to the following evaluative criteria, listed in descending order of importance:

1. The scope, significance, and impact of the contributions;
2. The team’s performance in the current season’s Semifinals and Online Stages;
3. The prior achievements and reputation of the team and its members.

The final qualified teams will be made by the **SC** and approved by **Chair of SC**.

2.4 Part IV: Reallocation of Vacated or Additional Slots

2.4.1 Reallocation Protocol

In the event of team withdrawals, vacated slots shall be reallocated to teams not yet qualified, in accordance with their relative rankings in the Semifinals.

2.4.2 Expansion Clause

The **SC**, in consultation with **EC**, **OC**, and **TC**, reserves the right to increase the total number of participating teams beyond the minimum of twenty (20). The allocation of such additional slots shall be determined by the **SC**.

3 Appeals

A team may file a formal appeal with the **SC** concerning alleged procedural errors in the application of these Regulations. Appeals concerning the substance or outcome of a discretionary decision by the **SC** shall not be considered.

Appeals must be submitted in English to `admin@ucup.ac` within seven (7) calendar days of the publication of the final list of qualified teams. The **SC** shall render a decision on the appeal, and the decision articulated by the **Chair of SC** shall be final and not subject to further appeal.

Final Provision

These Regulations shall enter into force upon the date of publication. These Regulations shall remain in effect for the duration of the 3rd Universal Cup Finals qualification process. The **SC** reserves the right to amend these Regulations as may be deemed necessary. Any amendment or subsequent version of these Regulations officially published by the **SC** shall supersede all prior versions in their entirety. All decisions made by the **Chair of SC** in the execution of these Regulations are final and binding upon all participants.

A Clarificatory Notes

- Q1.** Is participation in the Online Stages mandatory for qualification?
A1. No. While performance in the Online Stages is a direct path to qualification (Part I), qualification may also be achieved through exceptional performance in the Semifinals (Part II) or through a community contributor invitation (Part III).
- Q2.** If a top-10 team from the season rating leaderboard declines its invitation, will the 11th-ranked team be invited?
A2. No. Such vacated slots are not filled from the season rating leaderboard. They are reallocated according to Part IV, which prioritizes performance in the Semifinals.
- Q3.** What is the rationale for the Contributor Invitation not being based solely on competitive rankings?
A3. The Contributor Invitation (Part III) is specifically designed to recognize and reward vital forms of service to the Universal Cup that transcend competitive performance. These may include logistical, technical, or educational contributions that are essential to the success of the Cup but are not reflected in rankings.
- Q4.** May individuals or teams apply for contributor slots if their primary contribution was not contest authorship?
A4. Yes. Contest authorship is explicitly listed as one form of contribution, but it is not exhaustive. All applicants who can demonstrate substantial and significant involvement in the community are encouraged to apply for consideration.