

# CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES

All games submitted for judging in the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge must adhere to the following guidelines regarding content and themes.

These guidelines are based on both the Guidelines for the Classification of Computer Games in Australia, as well as the recommendations expressed in the rating categories of the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB).

- 1 All games entered must be suitable for play by all age groups, and must conform to the 'G' rating descriptor as issued by the Australian Classification Board, and the 'E' or 'Everyone' rating descriptor as issued by the Entertainment Software Rating Board**

Content is generally suitable for all ages. May contain minimal cartoon, fantasy or mild violence and/or infrequent use of mild language.



[http://www.esrb.org/ratings/ratings\\_guide.aspx](http://www.esrb.org/ratings/ratings_guide.aspx)

The content is very mild in impact. The G classification is suitable for everyone. G products may contain classifiable elements such as language and themes that are very mild in impact.



<http://www.classification.gov.au/Guidelines/Pages/G.aspx>

- 2 In addition to conforming to the above 'E' and 'G' rating descriptors, all games entered must comply with the following specific expectations with regard to game content:**

## ***i. Violence***

Very mild, comical violence is acceptable but any violence depicted in the game must:

- have a low sense of threat or menace,
- contain no use of visible blood or gore,
- be justified by context, and;
- must not be realistic in nature, or imitate any real-life scenario.

## ***ii. Sex***

Games shall contain no references (implicit or implied) to sexual activity of any kind.

## ***iii. Language***

Games shall contain no profane, crude or coarse language of any kind. This includes colloquial terms, slang terms and profanity

in languages other than English. Games must not contain any content that is defamatory.

Games must not contain any language which is unlawful or which violates laws regarding harassment, discrimination, racial vilification, privacy or contempt.

## ***iv. Drug Use***

Games shall contain no references (implicit or implied) to drug use of any kind. Please note that this includes illicit and illegal substances, prescribed drugs and legalized drugs (such as caffeine, nicotine and alcohol).

## ***v. Nudity***

Games shall contain no nudity of any kind.

## ***vi. Themes***

Games must not endorse, suggest or advocate for any of the following additional themes:

- Gambling (simulated or otherwise)
- Discrimination of any kind
- Illegal activity of any kind
- Impersonation of specific real life people, including public figures.

- 3 Games submitted for judging in the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge:**

- must not contain any intellectual property, including footage, images, artwork, programming or sounds that are not created by the Applicant unless such content is included as part of the Game Engine; and
- must be solely the Applicant's original work and must not be created in collaboration with any other individual or entity

*Breaching, or failing to comply with these classification guidelines may result in disqualification of the entry.*

*In circumstances where these guidelines have been severely breached or ignored, the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge may notify the Parents/Guardians or listed school contact of the entrant(s) and provide particulars of the offending material.*

# TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

All games submitted for judging in the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge must adhere to the following guidelines and technical specifications.

- 1 All submitted games must run in a Microsoft Windows operating system, or in an identified Internet browser.**
- 2 All submitted games must utilize a keyboard and mouse based control system**
- 3 All submitted games must function, first and foremost, as single-player games.**
- 4 All submitted games must function/run independently of a need to download/install specific game development software, or additional software.**
- 5 Submitted games should refrain from the use of store-bought or purchased assets**

Each of these specifications are explained below:

## **All submitted games must run in a Microsoft Windows operating system, or in an identified Internet browser.**

While games may be developed using any free, or free for education, development platform, on any given operating system, the final version of the submitted game must run on a Microsoft Windows operating system, or in a nominated internet browser.

When selecting a game development platform, participants should ensure that the resulting game can be produced/exported successfully for operation on Microsoft Windows.

## **All submitted games must utilize a keyboard and mouse based control system**

The rise and increasing prominence of tablet-based and mobile-based games is noted by the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge, and we understand there may be a strong desire from students to develop games for these platforms; however traditional PC gaming is, in many instances, still highly relevant and is the supported format for this competition.\*

To support our ability to effectively judge, compare and assess the games submitted in this year's competition, participants are asked to constrain their efforts to games designed to be played using:

- a standard keyboard only
- a standard two-button mouse only
- a combination of a standard keyboard and standard two-button mouse used simultaneously

## **All submitted games must function, first and foremost, as single-player games.**

Games that provide an opportunity to play with others are great, and the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge fully endorses the value of cooperative, collaborative or competitive play between multiple parties, however we require that all games submitted in the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge are designed primarily for play by a single player.

We do not wish to discourage participants to omit multiplayer modes of play, however, we ask that these considerations be treated as secondary to the single player experience.

## **All submitted games must function/run independently of a need to download/install specific game development software, or additional software.**

Games submitted in the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge must be submitted in such a way that they will open, run and allow play without a need to download or install additional software on the players' behalf.

For the most part, this requirement refers to specific complete programs. We understand that, when developing games in an environment that is constantly changing and advancing, there may be a need to update versions of plugins and commonly used utilities (i.e. Adobe Flash Player) to the most current versions. Such updates are an acceptable expectation and will not invalidate any submission.

\*The Australian STEM Video Game Challenge will endeavor to support or introduce categories specifically for mobile and tablet based games in the future, in line with our capacities and judging capabilities.

## **Submitted games should refrain from the use of store-bought or purchased assets**

The Australian STEM Video Game Challenge is intended to build and encourage capabilities in a number of areas. The development of characters, construction of environments and the realization of artwork is an important component of the game development process, and part of the challenge that exists in creating an original game.

While many game development platforms offer an ability to purchase/utilize store-bought assets, or assets developed by a broader community of users, the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge wishes to discourage the use of these assets for the purposes of the competition.

We do, however, recognize that in many cases participants in the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge are developing games for the first time, and in these cases the use of purchased assets may be advantageous to the building of skills and to the understanding of the game development process. Therefore, while we do not encourage the use of these assets, we understand their usefulness as vehicles for learning, and will not disqualify, or omit submissions that make use of them.

**At a minimum, we expect that the main characters and sounds, important tools and obstacles, as well as primary backgrounds are the student's original work.**

*Failure to adhere to these guidelines may impact our ability to adequately judge and assess game submissions, and may result in the submission being omitted from the judging process.*

