

gamescom award 2021 - Regulations

Preface

The **gamescom award 2021** comes with several new features:

- The range of categories has been adapted (see table in the Annex).
- The requirements for the submission of gameplay footage have been specified (see overview in the appendix).
- All games by [official partners of gamescom](#), which will be presented during gamescom now, can be submitted.
- Selected winners will be announced on Wednesday, August 25, 2021 during gamescom: Opening Night Live.
- The winners of the gamescom awards 2021 will be announced on Friday, August 27, 2021 as part of gamescom studio.

The deadline for submissions is **Tuesday, August 3, 2021 – 4:00 pm [UTC+2]!**

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1 Object of the gamescom award

- 1.1 The gamescom award 2021 shall be given to honor outstanding games, extensions, partners, announcements, and trailers that will be presented at gamescom 2021.
- 1.2 Submissions for gamescom award will be evaluated by an independent and internationally staffed jury. Only categories within the category group "Consumer Awards" will be conferred based on a consumer survey.
- 1.3 These regulations are binding for organizers, judges, members of the award office, the award committee as well as participating companies. In cases of doubt, the German version of these regulations is legally binding.
- 1.4 The award's time schedule will be decided annually by the award committee and communicated in an appropriate and timely manner. Annexed to these regulations, it includes all relevant deadlines and submission periods.

2 Definitions

See appendix for an overview of all categories (and their category groups).

- 2.1 The term „award submissions“ includes all games, add-ons / DLCs, products, partners, as well as Streamers and Let's Players, which were submitted to the award committee within the deadline or are accredited at gamescom respectively.
- 2.2 Within these regulations, „game“ stands for interactive videogames as well as playable demo versions that are hands-on playable on site for all visitors. The term includes all add-ons/DLCs whereby they are subject to additional requirements and restrictions specified within clause 2.
- 2.3 "Add-ons / DLCs" describes additional content for existing games that enhances possible courses of action and features to a more than insignificant extent (e.g. significant number of new weapons, levels, character models or vehicles). These features can be sold separately or as part of a re-release of the original game.
- 2.4 "Partner companies" are those companies that are official partners as part of gamescom now.

3 Award office and award committee

- 3.1 The award office is responsible for organizing and conducting the gamescom award and is established by the Digital Gaming Culture Foundation (Stiftung Digitale Spielkultur). Among its tasks are:
 - a) Processing award submissions, including the dismissal of submissions that do not abide by the specified conditions or whose company violates any rules within these regulations. In cases of uncertainty, the award office will consult the award committee;

- b) Answering inquiries concerning the conduction of the award, especially regarding eligibility, nominations, winning a category or in a category group, or decisions of the jury;
- c) Determining nominees and category winners by evaluating the voting documents that have been handed out to the jury and
- d) Organizing the gamescom award show.

3.2 Besides the award office, the award committee will be implemented as a supervisory body, consisting of one representative of Stiftung Digitale Spielekultur as well as two experts that are selected for one year. Spokesperson and head of the award committee is the representative of Stiftung Digitale Spielekultur. The award committee supervises the office's actions and can, in case of doubt, make final decisions about the interpretation of these regulations and their application to special cases. Additionally, it can change or annul decisions by the award office at its own discretion, following its own initiative or the request of an affected person or company.

The award committee is responsible for

- a) Composing the jury and the categories' sub-juries, ensuring the jury's confidentiality and independence, as well as potentially excluding jury members in compliance with these regulations;
- b) Changing categories or category groups if needed as well as removing or merging categories in line with these regulations;

3.3 Enquiries are decided upon with a simple majority. Within the submission period, decisions need to be made within 72 hours. After the submission period has ended, the award committee needs to reach a decision within 24 hours after the enquiry has been made. If this is not possible, the head of the award committee decides about the respective enquiry on his or her own.

3.4 The head of the award committee needs to justify decisions in writing. These decisions are final and cannot be subject to appeals.

4 Categories for the gamescom awards

See appendix for an overview of all categories (and their category groups).

4.1 At all times during and after the submission period, objective reasons may lead the award committee to change category definitions, merge categories and/or discard categories.

This includes the office's right to discard a category when there are fewer than three submissions. Within the category group „Platform“ the office can furthermore merge the three separate console categories to the combined category „Best Console Game“. In individual cases, objective reasoning may lead the award office to deviate from these regulations.

- 4.2 If changes have been made after the submission period has ended, the award office decides how submissions affected by the changes will be assigned to other categories after its own discretion. Even if subsequent changes are made, all submissions in accordance with the rules need to be accepted by the committee.
- 4.3 The applicable categories of gamescom award will be announced by July 19, 2021. The final categories and category groups will be announced by the award office in sufficient time.
- 4.4 Only those games or products can win the award „Best of gamescom“ which have also won in the category groups genre or platform; award winners of the category groups Consumer Awards or gamescom global Awards are not eligible for participation in “Best of gamescom”.
- 4.5 Only nominees (compliant with clause 10) of the category groups genre and platform are eligible for the category gamescom “Most Wanted”. Every game or product is only listed in the survey once, irrespective of the number of nominations or platforms

5 General conditions for submission

- 5.1 Every award submission must meet the following conditions and criteria. By submitting a game or product, a company binds itself to these regulations.
- 5.2 Only full-value games or products or parts thereof can be submitted. An exception is made for Games in the category Best Ongoing Game (in compliance with clause 5.8).
- 5.3 Games or products will only be authorised when meeting all specified deadlines and when submitted together with the submission form.
- 5.4 No direct submissions are possible for the category groups Consumer Awards and gamescom global Awards.
- 5.5 Participating companies must be official partners of gamescom being present at gamescom now.
- 5.6 Award submissions must not be published and sold to consumers prior to the beginning of gamescom 2021 (excluding exceptions specified in clause 5.8). Closed or open alpha or beta versions of games (including Early Access) do not count as published within the scope of these regulations. The earliest release date for submitted titles is gamescom’s Opening Night Live (August 25, 2021).
- 5.7 As a basic principle, an award submission that has been submitted to any previous gamescom awards cannot participate in the competition a second time, even if it has been submitted in another category.
- 5.8 Exceptions are made if a game is re-released with additional content, it can be submitted in the category Best Ongoing Game in compliance with clause 2.3. Add-ons, DLC and Games-as-a-service can also be submitted in the category Best Ongoing Game even if the original game has been previously submitted. The award committee may allow

further exceptions, especially if a game is based on a previous submission or constitutes a development of that game significant enough to qualify as a new award submission. Submitting one game or product in several categories within one year (i.e. for different consoles or genres) is generally legitimate. A standalone sequel of a game qualifies as a new game.

- 5.9 A protective charge of EUR 360 (excluding VAT) needs to be paid to the award committee for an award submission in one category. For submissions up to three different categories, the protective charge amounts to EUR 600 (excluding VAT). For every additional category on top of the third, a surcharge of EUR 200 (excluding VAT) needs to be paid. There are no further discounts. The protective charge will neither be refunded entirely nor partially if the award committee needs to merge two or more categories into one. Exception: If a game has been submitted in one category only and if that category is discarded thus rendering the submission void, the protective charge can be refunded. The protective charge is to be paid upon receiving a corresponding invoice.
- 5.10 After the submission period has ended, no further award submissions will be accepted. Furthermore, missing information can be submitted only in exceptional cases and after prior communication with the award office.
- 5.11 Incomplete application documents, including missing payments of the protective charge that was not granted as an exception by the award office, do not qualify for participating at gamescom award.
- 5.12 If the award office reaches the conclusion that an award submission does not fulfil all necessary conditions for participation in compliance with these regulations, it can exclude the submission from the competition. Moreover, games that are potentially in violation of German laws can be excluded by the award committee.
- 5.13 If an award submission violates any terms of these regulations, the organizer of gamescom award, represented by the award office, will take the respective award submission out of ongoing procedures and / or any won gamescom award will be retrospectively revoked. In that case the award will pass on to the next-ranked game or product.
- 5.14 If an award needs to be revoked after its bestowal due to violations of the regulations, the organizer of gamescom award charges an administrative fee of EUR 3.500 plus VAT for past and future services.

6 Special submission requirements for the category Best Indie Game

- 6.1 Deviating from general submission rules, following special terms apply to the category Best Indie Game: Deviating from clause 5.8, award submissions to the category Best Indie Game need to pay a protective charge of 50,- Euro as long as the title is submitted exclusively in that category.

7 Duties resulting from a submission

- 7.1 Award submissions need to be handed in until the date given in the regulations' appendix „Time schedule for gamescom award“ to Stiftung Digitale Spielkultur via e-mail (award@gamescom.de).
- 7.2 By submitting a game or product, the company agrees that the content of the submission form can be used for the purpose of handling, nomination and evaluation as well as for promotional and press activities within the context of gamescom award, especially on gamescom's website. As an exception, non-disclosure agreements are possible if their constrictions are manageable for the award office and the judges. In case of doubt, the award committee decides on the acceptance of NDAs.
- 7.3 Approximately ten minutes of gameplay footage must be submitted to the award committee within the deadline which can be retrieved and downloaded until the end of gamescom. The gameplay video **must** include real gameplay sequences (core game mechanics), sequences rendered in the graphics engine used and showing typical game-based camera perspective(s), as well as game-related soundscapes. The gameplay video **may** include an audio commentary (preferably in English) and may indicate technical achievements, gameplay and other innovations and community aspects. The exact specifications for the gameplay video can be found in the overview in the appendix.
- 7.4 The organizer of gamescom award will announce the winners. Until then, all participating parties agree not to disclose any information about this.
- 7.5 If a submitting company offends any of its duties specified in clause 7, its award submission can be excluded from gamescom award by the jury or the award office.

8 Composition of the jury and sub-juries

- 8.1 The award committee staffs gamescom award's jury in compliance with these regulations with suitable representatives from German and international media as well as social media companies, members of the industry, gaming communities and game testers of the USK. The award committee determines the size of the jury and possible sub-juries (clause 8.3) as well the number of representatives of the named groups within these juries at its own discretion. The jury's composition will be announced in due time.
- 8.2 Only those persons can be appointed to the jury who
- a) reached legal age and are legally competent according to the laws of their country of origin;
 - b) work in the games industry or have a direct connection to the games industry;
 - c) acknowledge the mandatory character of these regulations in writing (via e-mail) towards the award committee and
 - d) sign the jury's non-disclosure agreement for the gamescom award.

8.3 With the exceptions of „Best of gamescom” (which is conferred by the jury in its entirety) and the category group Consumer Awards (which is not awarded by the jury), the award committee may compose sub-juries for every category (group). The award committee appoints jury members to their respective category groups while especially acknowledging:

- A judge’s professional qualification for the respective sub-jury;
- an appropriate number of male and female judges in every sub-jury;
- an adequate relation of national and international judges in sub-juries as well as the jury in its entirety.

If applicable, award submission for a category group will only be judged by the respective sub-jury. The category Best of gamescom is an exception, as all winners of the category groups “Genre” and “Platform” are eligible for this award. If these regulations refer to the “jury”, it may constitute the respective sub-jury when required by context.

8.4 The composition of the jury will be publicly announced by the organizer. Within the context of gamescom award and gamescom, every judge agrees to be mentioned by name and/or alias, a short résumé, job description and company in media, press and gamescom’s marketing material, in printed and online format in vision, sound and word. This consent is based on the European Union’s GDPR.

8.5 A calling to the jury is only valid until the end of the respective year’s gamescom and does not automatically extend to the subsequent event.

8.6 Working as a jury member is voluntary and without payment.

8.7 Judges are required to inform the award committee about any changes in their own or their employer’s professional duties. If a jury member does not fulfil the requirements of these regulations after a professional change, the award office can exclude the judge from the jury.

8.8 Jury members are bound to secrecy about any internal (i.e. not publicly known) information (including processes and contents) they acquired through their work as judges. It is of utmost importance that judges refrain from disclosing nominees and winners prior to their official announcement by the organizer. Furthermore, members of the jury are bound by the non-disclosure agreement for the gamescom award.

9 General proceedings and tasks of the jury

9.1 The jury rates all award submissions in the category groups gamescom global Awards, platform and genre, selects nominees for the categories if applicable and decides on a winner, in each case in accordance with these regulations.

9.2 The jury evaluates the award entries freely and independently. The decisions of the jury are independent in particular of the organizers game – Association of German Games-

Branche and Koelnmesse, USK, Stiftung Digitale Spielkultur, of individual companies of the games industry and/or of belonging to a particular employer.

- 9.3 Judges are obliged to inform themselves appropriately about all award submissions in due time (i.e. before deciding on nominees in compliance with clause 10).
- 9.4 During a jury meeting in form of a video conference judges evaluate all nominated award submissions extensively.
- 9.5 To properly evaluate all award submissions, jury members should particularly draw on the following material and resources:
- a) Information that has been provided by participating companies prior to or during gamescom;
 - b) Information provided by the organizer;
 - c) Information, experiences, and knowledge that jury members gathered due to their professional experience in the gaming industry and/or
 - d) Impressions and experiences gathered during the one-day jury meeting.
- 9.6 If a jury member does not respect the schedule and/or these regulations, the award committee can terminate their jury membership with immediate effect. In this case, all valuations of this jury member will not be considered in upcoming decisions (e.g. nominations, deciding on a winner). All decisions made before the judge's exclusion will remain unaffected, regardless of the judge's contribution to them.
- 9.7 If the jury reaches a level score during the nomination process (clause 10) and/or the selection of category winners (clause 11), the award submission that
- a) Received most votes for the 1st place;
 - b) In case of equal votes for 1st place, received most votes for 2nd place;
 - c) In case of equal votes for 1st and 2nd place, received most votes for 3rd place; and
 - d) In case of equal votes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place, gets selected by lot, with one person mixing the tickets and another person blindly drawing the lot
- wins.

10 Nomination

- 10.1 If a category has more than three award submissions, the jury selects three nominees according to this clause.

- 10.2 If nominees are chosen in a category, a judge selects three favorites from the total of award submissions and awards points according to their preferences: 12 points for first place, 8 points for second place and 6 points for third place.
- 10.3 The three award submissions that received the most points from the responsible judges are nominated. By way of exception, all award submissions in a category with three or less total submissions are automatically nominated. In case of a level score, clause 9.7 is valid.
- 10.4 The award committee consolidates the list of nominees and announces it in compliance with clause 14.1. The list contains no ranking of nominees.

11 Selection of category winners and Best of gamescom winner

- 11.1 If there are nominees in a category, the winner can only be selected from this pool of award submissions.
- 11.2 To choose a winner in every category, every judge assigns 12 points to the first, 8 points to the second and 6 points to the third place. The nominees that received most points is the winner of the respective category. In case of a level score, clause 9.7 is valid.
- 11.3 Clause 11 also applies when selecting a winner in the category gamescom global Awards.
- 11.4 Clause 11 accordingly applies to the category Best of gamescom, in which the winner is selected by the jury from the entirety of legitimate category winners.

12 Selection of the winners of the Consumer Awards

- 12.1 All nominated games or products in the category groups "Genre" and "Platform" are eligible for selection in the category gamescom "Most Wanted".
- 12.2 Selected partner streamers of gamescom are eligible in the Category Best Streamer.
- 12.3 The winner of Consumer Awards will be asked to vote for their most anticipated game (only games and products) by means of a consumer survey via gamescom's social media channels and/or via further media partners respectively.
- 12.4 Consumers vote for their most anticipated nominated game presented at gamescom. Every consumer can vote his or her favorite nominee from the category groups "Genre" and "Platform" and has one vote. Multiple votes for different games or products are not possible.
- 12.5 The game that receives the most points from consumers wins gamescom "Most Wanted" Consumer Award. If two or more games receive the same score, they share first place.

13 Selection of the winners of gamescom global Awards

- 13.1 All partners of gamescom according to the definition of clause 2.5 are eligible for selection for the category Best Lineup.
- 13.2 The jury determines the winner of the category „HEART OF GAMING Award“ completely off its own accord. Not only games, add-ons / DLC, products, technologies etc. but also persons, institutions, companies, concepts, or ideas are eligible in this category. Award winners from previous gamescom awards in this category are not eligible for renewed election. The award committee has a veto right in case the awarding of the prize conflicts with the principles and matters of concern of gamescom. In that case a prize will not be awarded.
- 13.3 All trailers shown during gamescom now are eligible for selection in the category “Best Trailer”.
- 13.4 All game announcements, premieres or revelations made within the duration of the gamescom by partner companies according to clause 2.5 are available for selection in the category “Best Announcement”.
- 13.5 All category winners of the genre and platform categories are eligible for selection for the main award “Best of gamescom”.

14 Announcement of nominees and winners

- 14.1 Nominees are announced publicly in a press release by gamescom.
- 14.2 Winners are announced during an award ceremony at gamescom. The prospective date for the respective year (subject to short-term changes decided on by the award office) is specified in the appendix „Time Schedule of gamescom award“.
- 14.3 Deviating from this, selected winners will be already announced during gamescom: Opening Night Live.

15 Usage of gamescom award’s logos; trophy

- 15.1 Winners of gamescom awards are entitled to use the title “[category] gamescom award winner [year]” as well as the corresponding logo and word and figurative mark for global advertising purposes upon consultation with the organizer. Eventual additional trademark guidelines decided upon and communicated by the organizer at its own discretion must be respected. It is not permitted to modify, change and/or isolate certain parts of the logo or the word and figurative mark. All rights relating to the logo or gamescom award in general not explicitly conceded within these regulations (especially trademark, copyright, or exploitation rights) remain with the organizer of gamescom awards.
- 15.2 Winners receive a trophy. The trophy’s ownership is transferred to the winner (i.e. the respective company) on handover or delivery.

16 Miscellaneous

16.1 These regulations are liable to German law.

16.2 The regulations are not subject to legal recourse.

Effective: July 15, 2021

Appendix: Time schedule of gamescom award 2021

- Composition and announcement of the jury until the beginning of August 2021
 - Provision of the submission form to registered partners of gamescom on the landing page of the gamescom award from July 19, 2021.
 - Deadline for award submissions is August 3, 2021, 4:00 pm [UTC+2]. Submissions must be directed at Stiftung Digitale Spielkultur via e-mail (award@gamescom.de).
 - Jury members receive additional information to submitted material by August 04, 2021.
 - Jury members send their three favorites in their categories as suggested nominees to Stiftung Digitale Spielkultur until August 09, 2021.
 - The award committee informs participating companies about the nominees from August 13, 2021.
 - Publication of a press release containing the nominees and the names of nominated companies by Stiftung Digitale Spielkultur and Koelnmesse from Monday, August 16, 2021.
 - Voting for the gamescom Consumer Awards after publication of the nominees and until August 26, 2021, 3:00 pm [UTC+2].
 - Winners for each category will be informed via e-mail from Thursday, August 12, 2021.
 - Election of the winners in „gamescom global Awards“ until August 26, 2021, 3:00 pm [UTC+2].
 - Publication of winners during a live streamed event and via press release
 - partly on Thursday, August 25, 2021 during gamescom: Opening Night Live and
 - the rest on Friday, August 27, 2021 during gamescom studio.
- The actual time frame can vary depending on time and date of the award ceremony.
- Trophies will presumably be sent to winners within two weeks after gamescom.

Appendix: Categories overview gamescom award 2021

No.	Category Group	Category	honors	selection from	nominated by	voted by
1	Genre	Best Action Adventure Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
2	Genre	Best Action Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
3	Genre	Best Family Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
4	Genre	Best Indie Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
5	Genre	Best Racing Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
6	Genre	Best Remaster	Games	submissions	jury	jury
7	Genre	Best Role Playing Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
8	Genre	Best Simulation Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
9	Genre	Best Sports Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
10	Genre	Best Strategy Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
11	Genre	Best Multiplayer Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
12	Genre	Best Ongoing Game	Games as a service, Game Add-ons, DLC	submissions	jury	jury
13	Genre	Most Original Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
14	Platform	Best Microsoft Xbox Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
15	Platform	Best Nintendo Switch Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
16	Platform	Best PC Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
17	Platform	Best Sony PlayStation Game	Games	submissions	jury	jury
18	Consumer Awards	Best Streamer	Streamers, Let's Players, People	tba	award committee	Consumers
19	Consumer Awards	gamescom "Most Wanted"	Games	nominees of category groups genre or platform	jury	Consumers
20	gamescom global Awards	Best Announcement	Announcements, Reveals, Premieres	tba	award committee	jury
21	gamescom global Awards	Best Lineup	Companies	official partners of gamescom	jury	jury
22	gamescom global Awards	Best of gamescom	Games	winners of category groups genre or platform	jury	jury
23	gamescom global Awards	Best Trailer	Trailers	tba	award committee	jury
24	gamescom global Awards	HEART OF GAMING Award			jury	jury

Gameplay Footage gamescom award 2021

Footage must feature

- Duration: up to 10min
- high-quality \geq 1080p
- actual in-game core gameplay mechanics
- sections rendered in applied graphics engine w/ camera angle(s) true to gameplay perspective
- actual in-game soundscape
- unimpeded access

Footage may feature

- voice-over commentary (preferably English)
- display of technical achievements
- display of gameplay innovations or features
- aspects of community involvement, fan service etc.