

Cosplay Contest Handbook

Foreword

Cosplay is an incredibly important part of our convention and every event we love to see our dedicated Cosplayers turn out in style to showcase their latest creations. We appreciate all of you and your efforts, dedication and passion in bringing our favourite characters to life for everyone to enjoy.

As organisers we strive to bring you the best experience in whichever contest or contests you chose to enter. This comes with an important caveat though; We expect our entrants to **read up on the contest they are entering** in advance so they are aware of the contest rules, format, the entry deadlines, contest times and any specific entry requirements. This point alone will enable both organisers and entrants to have a far better time together :)

Cosplay Staff Introductions

The majority of Cosplay events at our convention are carefully planned, administered and implemented by our dedicated Cosplay Team. While we'd really like to know all of our entrants by name and recognise you that's not always possible, your costumes are really that great! However it's a much easier task for you to know who we are:

Cosplay Director

- Amanda L

Cosplay Coordinators

- Martyn B
- Sara M

Important!

The information contained in this handbook, while accurate at the time of writing, is subject to change. For up-to-date information please consult <http://otafest.com> or simply email us with your questions at cosplay@otafest.com

Thank you

Preparation

The very first thing you should do is to decide which contests you would like to enter and determine if your Cosplay would qualify for entry. Again **read up on the contest you are entering** and if you have any questions at all please, please, please email us. Our contact details are at the end of the handbook.

- You're thinking about entering a contest so we'll assume you have a Cosplay picked out. Be familiar with your Cosplay, seriously, did you make it, how long did it take you if you did, are you wearing it or do you have a friend modelling for you?
- Be aware of the contest rules, does your Cosplay qualify, do you have to be the one wearing it? Did you have to make it?
- Know what day your chosen contests are on and at what time. If a contest has an audience and starts at 2pm in the afternoon then you **must** be there well before that time for set up. The exact times will be included in the contest details but it's usually 30 minutes to an hour before show time.
- If you are performing a skit then rehearse it, know your moves, know your lines or pre-record them, the audience will respond favourably to an entertaining well rehearsed performance.
- If you have music/audio for a skit entry then upload it beforehand! We stopped accepting CDs so make sure you have your MP3 file and upload it when you preregister. Which leads us to:
- **Preregister!** This saves everyone time and makes sure your information is correct beforehand. If you have problems signing up then email us, we'd be happy to help you with any issues or questions you may have.
- Make sure you have your pass or wristband, you have to be a registered Otafest attendee to enter any contest.
- Check the prop policy and be sure to have prop check take a look at any prop you may have before you attend the contest.
- Turn up. Yes. A small but important point. A significant portion of our preregistered entrants fail to attend the contest and that's okay we understand things happen, minds change and Cosplays don't always get finished on time. Please let us know and we'll make a note of it. Thanks.
- **Communication.** It's good to know right now at the beginning that you can contact us at any point for clarification on... Well. Anything! We're friendly people, talk to us. :)

Our Contests

We offer four day-of Cosplay contests of varying time commitments and skill levels. We hope to provide something for every Cosplayer to enter no matter where they are in their Cosplay careers.

Cosplay Skit Contest

1.5 hour time commitment

This Skit Contest is a performance contest in front of an attendee audience with the important requirement that you be in Cosplay :)

Requirements

You do not need to make your own costume but you do need to be in Cosplay. You are required to perform a short skit, monologue, song, dance or anything else entertaining! You need to preregister, there is no day-of registration as we do not have time. You need to provide your music/audio as a file, MP3 is our format of choice. You can be a single entry or a group, either way there is only one prize per entry.

Format

We will meet 1 hour before the posted show time in order to confirm entrant, set up and get everyone in performance order. Similar to the traditional Cosplay contest, entrants will line up off stage in performance order and wait their turn. You will be called up to perform in front of the audience and our judges and then you will leave the stage and the next entrant will perform. Seating will be provided at the front of the room for you to watch the rest of the show. Once all entrants have performed our judges will leave the room to deliberate, we will have a short intersession video or performance while they do. Our judges will then return to the room and present the awards right away.

Awards

- Best in Show.
- Fan Favourite.
- Judge's Choice (x3).

Important Points

- Be in Cosplay, you don't need to have made it.
- Be entertaining, engage the audience.
- Preregister using the online form. **No day-of registration!**
- Provide any music/audio you require beforehand as **MP3 files**.
- As always, *please* be on time! We have to start on time with or without you.
- Awards announced at the end of the contest.

Details for Fashion and Skit

Registration

Date: Saturday 1st July

Time: 9am to 11am

Where: Macleod E1

Call Time

12 noon, Main Events

Show Time

Date: Saturday 1st July

Time: 12:30pm to 2:30pm

Where: Main Events

Awards: During

Cosplay Showcase Contest

2 hour time commitment

This is a contest especially for craftsmanship, there is no audience and no performance. Many of our talented Cosplayers are excellent craftsmen but are less inclined to show off their work in front of an audience and we completely understand. The Cosplay Showcase is not a spectator event, usually the only people in the room (aside from staff and judges) will be your fellow entrants and those waiting with them.

Requirements

You have to have made most of your Cosplay yourself, 80% or more. You don't have to wear your Cosplay, you can have a friend model it for you if that's something you prefer. There are no performance requirements and no audience. You should preregister, it is very much encouraged as it saves time, besides if you preregister you'll be called up before those who don't and if we fill up you won't miss out!

Format

The contest will run for three hours during which we will check in, judge and photograph our entrants. Once the contest starts we will call any preregistered entrants to the sign up table first to check them in, once all preregistered entrants have been checked in we will then ask everyone else to form a line and sign up, **if there are still places available!** You will be assigned a number badge and a category (Prop/Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced). Your number is your judging call number, your category is decided based on your previous Cosplay experience. The judges may move you into a different category at their discretion based on the information you provide. You will then wait for the judges to call your number, be aware of those before you so you know roughly when to expect to be called. We strongly suggest you remain in the room while you wait so you don't miss your turn. It can be a long wait, we're sorry about that but it's unavoidable, bring something to occupy the time. If you want to minimise the wait then preregister and turn up promptly. Once your number is called head to the judging table, our judges will ask you questions about your Cosplay, they are experienced costumers and in some cases professional guest judges. Be very honest about your work as they'll know if you're fibbing :) **You will get 3 minutes of time with the judges**, we have a timer so it's fair to everyone. Once you have been judged we'll take your photo properly and you are free to leave the room. Awards will be announced and presented after the judges have finished their deliberations. You don't have to be on hand to receive your award if you win one but it is preferred. :)

Cosplay Showcase Contest (Cont...)

Awards

- Advanced Winner.
- Advanced Runner Up.
- Intermediate Winner.
- Intermediate Runner Up.
- Beginner Winner.
- Beginner Runner Up.
- Prop or Judges Choice.*
- Prop or Judges Choice.*

*If we don't have any prop-only entries then we will assign the awards as Judges Choice Awards.

Important Points

- Make your own Cosplay, at least 80%.
- Preregister to save time and ensure entry.
- Preregistered entrants are judged first.
- We may cap entry!
- Turn up early to ensure you have time to be judged.
- Bring someone/something to entertain you while you wait to be judged.
- Be ready to explain your Cosplay to the judges and be honest!
- You have 3 minutes use them wisely!
- Awards announced at the end of the contest.

Details for Showcase

Date:	Friday 30 th June
Where:	Macleod E1
Check-in:	4pm to 6pm
Judging:	4pm to 6:30pm
Deliberations:	6:30pm to 6:45pm
Awards:	6:50pm

Cosplay Fashion Show

1.5 hour time commitment

We replaced the walk-on aspect of the traditional Cosplay Contest with the Fashion Show. You simply need to walk out on to the stage and strike a pose, you do not need to make your own costume. This contest is all about presentation, how much do you look like the character, how well do you pose, own it!

Requirements

You need to be in Cosplay and be able to strike a pose at our posing points on the stage, it's a good idea to practice your poses. There will be no performances, you do not need to make your own Cosplay. You will be able to sign up day-of but please be aware of the cut-off time (11:00am) as we will not be able to accept new entrants afterwards due to time constraints. We may also have to cap entry if we reach capacity so do turn up early if taking part is important to you.

Format

As this is another stage/audience show we will meet 30 minutes beforehand to check in and get entrants into their categories before the show starts. Entrants will come to the check in desk and be sorted into their categories, the order is first come, first served. Once everyone is checked in and placed in their category entrants will line up off stage, beginners first, then one by one be called up to pose on stage while some upbeat background music plays. Entrants will be asked their name and who they are Cosplaying as and then will have about 30 seconds to strike a pose for photos on the marked posing points. That's 30 seconds in total, not on each point :) Entrants then leave the stage and return to the waiting line in the same order as before. Once all the beginners have had their individual time on the stage the whole beginners group will parade on to the stage in order and the judges will present their awards to their favourites. The group will then leave the stage and the process will be repeated for the Intermediate and Advanced category groups.

Awards

- Advanced (x3)
- Intermediate (x3)
- Beginner (x3)

Important Points

- Be in Cosplay, you don't need to have made it.
- Practice your poses for maximum effect!
- Be on time! We don't want to start without you but we will if you're late.

Details for Fashion and Skit

Registration

Date: Saturday 1st July

Time: 9am to 11am

Where: Macleod E1

Call Time

12 noon, Main Events

Show Time

Date: Saturday 1st July

Time: 12:30pm to 2:30pm

Where: Main Events

Awards: During

Mr and Miss

10 minute time commitment

Our Popularity Contest! Also our easiest contest to enter, simply sign up, have your photo taken for our slide show and wear an entry sign so people know you're in the contest. You can then wander around the convention and people will know to vote for you. Note: We're sorry we have to bring this up but harassing attendees for votes is not allowed and **you will be disqualified if you do so**.

Requirements

Be in Cosplay, have your photos taken, wear a sign. You do not have to make your Cosplay.

Format

Come to the sign up desk from 10am to 12 noon and let us know your name, character and whether you are a Mr or a Miss. Generally speaking we go with what's "underneath the costume" but if you feel strongly one way or the other just let us know. We'll give you a sign with your number on it and take your photo for the slide show, then you're done! Voting will take place from 12 noon to 4pm at the sign up desk. People can watch the slide show, see their favourite in person or choose them from the voting list. We'd encourage people to see their favourite in person before committing to vote for them but it's entirely up to each voter. At the end of the voting period the votes will be tallied and the winners announced at Closing Ceremonies.

Awards

- Mr Winner
- Mr 1st Runner Up
- Mr 2nd Runner Up
- Miss Winner
- Miss 1st Runner Up
- Miss 2nd Runner Up

Details for Mr and Miss

Registration

Date: Sunday 2nd July

Time: 9am to 11am

Where: At Infobooth

Voting

Date: Sunday 2nd July

Time: 12 noon to 2:30pm

Where: At Infobooth

Awards: Closing Ceremonies

Important Points

- Choose a Cosplay with good popular appeal. Obscure subjects may not capture the imagination of voters but more importantly: Have fun!
- Do not harass voters! You will be disqualified.
- Have fun and be a good sport.
- Try and attend Closing Ceremonies (or have a representative attend) in case you win a prize!

Contest Comparison Table

	Skit	Showcase	Fashion	Mr and Miss
Must make your own Cosplay?	No	Yes	No	No
Appear in front of an audience	Yes	No	Yes	No
Performance required	Yes	No	No	No
Wear your own Cosplay	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Preregistration required	Yes	No	No	No
Approximate time commitment	1.5 hr	2 hr	1.5 hr	10 mins
Awards presented	After contest	After contest	After contest	At Closing Ceremonies
Categories	Beginner Intermediate Advanced	Beginner Intermediate Advanced Prop*	Beginner Intermediate Advanced	Mr Miss
Prizes	Best in Show Fan Favourite Judge's Choice (x3)	Advanced Winner Advanced Runner Up Intermediate Winner Intermediate Runner Up Beginner Winner Beginner Runner Up Prop or Judges Choice* (x2)	Advanced (x3) Intermediate (x3) Beginner (x3)	Mr Winner Mr 1 st Runner Up Mr 2 nd Runner Up Miss Winner Miss 1 st Runner Up Miss 2 nd Runner Up

*If we don't have any prop-only entries then we will assign the awards as Judges Choice Awards.

Frequently Asked Questions

What about the traditional Cosplay Contest?

We've listened to your feedback and noticed that Cosplayers really want a simple contest that is fun and doesn't take all day. We've spent close to a year coming up with the new multiple contest approach and have worked tirelessly to bring it from concept to reality.

Why so many contests?

Our convention is growing and so are our Cosplayer's time demands and skill levels. We want to provide a wide range of events with reasonable time commitments for our attendees.

Why do I have to be there earlier than the time in the schedule?

Our contests are run to scheduled times, we have to run things on time for everyone's sake as attendees (including you) plan their convention around the schedule. If you don't turn up early then we can't set up on time and the contest is delayed. If contestants are late we will start without them. We don't like turning people away so please don't put us in that position. Pay attention to our instructions and arrive at the time given for set up. Thank you. :)

Is it a good idea to preregister?

An emphatic YES! I was just going to leave it there but I'll elaborate. Preregistering allows you to fill out your own information without us asking "How do you spell that again?", it saves time on the day and it ensures you have a place in the contest (should you attend in time).

Are there any entry caps?

Usually no but there's always the chance we'll have to limit entry numbers. While this could happen at any contest it is now very likely we will have to cap entry for the Showcase Contest.

What if my preregistration details are incorrect or I changed my entry?

Email us, we'll update your information and give you a link so you can check it out. Don't submit another entry. Please? :)

Who decides who wins an award?

It's the judges. Surprise! :) Seriously though, we as organisers have no say in who wins unless the judge's decision is against the contest rules. The one exception is the Mr and Miss contest in which the attendees vote for their favourites, again we as organisers have no say, we simply report the results.

Frequently Asked Questions (cont...)

How will I be placed in a category (Skit/Showcase/Fashion)

When you sign up for a contest you answer a short series of questions about your past Cosplaying experience, we use these answers to place you in the categories. Be honest when answering these questions. The judges may move you between the categories at their discretion based on their conversations with you.

Can staff enter a contest?

Usually the answer is no except at the Cosplay Director's discretion. No staff who has any part in the organising and implementation of any of the contests can enter under any circumstances. That's a huge conflict of interest.

How can I be a judge?

Demonstrate to us you are very experienced and talented Cosplayer. Ideally you will have been a winner in our previous contests at the Advanced (formally Expert) level. Usually our judges are retired or semi-retired multiple contest winners or Cosplay guests.

How many contests can I enter?

Any and all of them as long as you meet the requirements!

Why do I have to wait so long to be judged for the Showcase Contest?

The same reason you have to wait to see a doctor :) There are people ahead of you, they most likely preregistered and got there before you.

I didn't do my research or check the times, I missed out, what can I do?

We're sorry about that, we'd love everyone who wants to participate to have their chance but in this situation you can only move forward and be better prepared next time.

I have questions, who should I ask?

Feel free to email us at cosplay@otafest.com. Please allow a couple of days for us to reply as we do receive a lot of emails. Thanks!