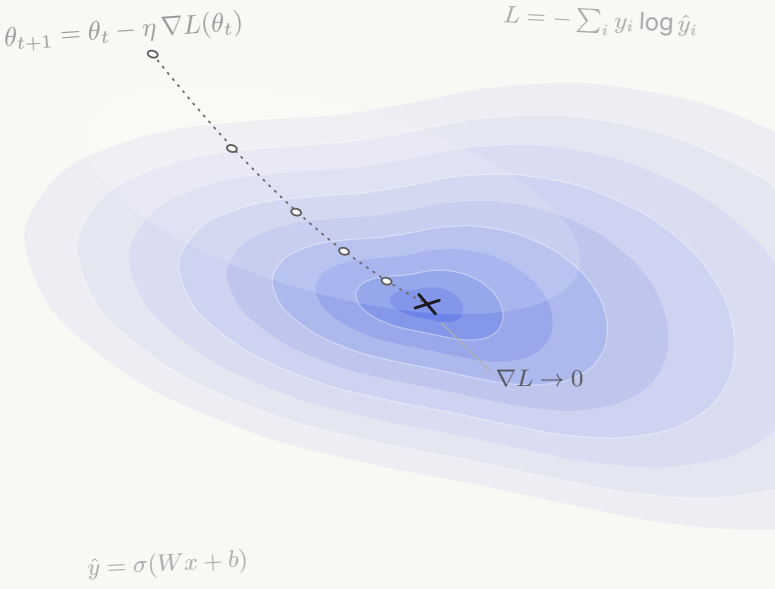
INFORMATION FLYER

International Machine Learning Competition

EDITION 2026



01 SECTION

What is IMLC?

Vision, Mission, and Values

Machine learning now sits behind search results, translation, medical imaging, and countless other tools we use every day. Most students who use these tools never learn how they actually work. We think that gap matters: understanding the models that shape decisions is becoming as fundamental as understanding statistics or algebra.

The International Machine Learning Competition offers students a platform to challenge their analytical and problem-solving skills, explore core machine learning concepts, and go deeper into this field beyond the standard school curriculum. We believe that blending education with friendly competition can inspire students to develop a lasting passion for machine learning, potentially leading to fulfilling careers in research, industry, education, or innovation.

IMLC is accessible to all students from all countries. All you need is a pen, paper, and an internet connection to join!

What makes IMLC unique?

While competition is part of IMLC, our core mission is to foster genuine engagement with machine learning, sparking curiosity and encouraging further exploration in this and related fields. IMLC is a learning journey, enabled by diverse problem formats that enhance a student's understanding through practical application.

- **Internationality**: From the very first round, IMLC is a truly global event. All participants tackle the same challenges, ensuring fair assessment and fostering international connections.
- **Digital Accessibility**: We utilize the power of the internet to open participation to students everywhere, regardless of geographic location or school affiliation. While teacher guidance is beneficial, motivated individuals can participate independently from anywhere.
- **Six Machine Learning Domains**: IMLC covers the full pipeline of machine learning, from fundamentals to current research. The competition spans six domains: Fundamentals, Optimization & Generalization, Deep Learning, Frontier Models, Applications, and Trustworthy AI.
- **Real-World Machine Learning**: IMLC problems typically draw on ideas from recently published research and real-world applications. This unique feature provides many participants with their first exposure to applying rigorous methods to current, authen-

tic problems.

- **Scaling Difficulty Levels**: Our problems are designed to engage both experienced machine learning enthusiasts and those beginning to explore the subject beyond the classroom.
- **Online Tools for Educators**: A dedicated teacher interface allows for streamlined management of student submissions, results tracking, and certificate access.
- **Local Communities & Ambassadors**: Our Ambassador Program empowers motivated students to inspire peers, organize local events, and build vibrant communities centered around a shared interest in machine learning.

02 SECTION

Who can participate?

Current high school and university students from all grades and countries are invited to participate. We have three age categories:

Junior	10th Grade and below (and < 16 years of age)
Youth	11th to 13th Grade (or $\geq$ 16 years of age)
Senior	1st Year College/University and higher (or $\geq$ 19 years of age)

Students from all age categories will receive the same problems in all rounds. However, the minimum number of points required to advance differs based on your age group. To succeed, you'll need curiosity, analytical thinking, mathematical skills, and creativity. A reliable internet connection is necessary for participation and submission.

My age or grade changes after the submission deadline. Which group do I belong to?

Your grade/age on the day of the Qualification Round submission deadline determines your age group for the entire competition duration.

Do I have to be a student to participate?

Yes, participation is open to students currently enrolled in high school, college, or university. If you are in a transitional period (e.g., gap year between high school and university) and intend to begin university studies soon, you are also welcome to participate.

03 SECTION

Why participate?

The International Machine Learning Competition is foremost an educational initiative, enabling students to develop and demonstrate their analytical skills across a wide range of machine learning challenges. To foster enthusiasm and friendly competition, participants also receive certificates and have the opportunity to earn awards, cash prizes, and international recognition.

Every participant receives a certificate acknowledging their effort. In the Final Round, exceptional performance is recognized with Bronze, Silver, or Gold Honours. The top students in each age category receive 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Prizes, while National Awards are presented to the highest-scoring participants from each country.

Senior Category

1st Prize	250 USD	Cash Prize, Special 1st Prize Certificate
2nd Prize	175 USD	Cash Prize, Special 2nd Prize Certificate
3rd Prize	125 USD	Cash Prize, Special 3rd Prize Certificate

Youth Category

1st Prize	200 USD	Cash Prize, Special 1st Prize Certificate
2nd Prize	150 USD	Cash Prize, Special 2nd Prize Certificate
3rd Prize	100 USD	Cash Prize, Special 3rd Prize Certificate

Junior Category

1st Prize	175 USD	Cash Prize, Special 1st Prize Certificate
2nd Prize	125 USD	Cash Prize, Special 2nd Prize Certificate
3rd Prize	100 USD	Cash Prize, Special 3rd Prize Certificate

We further honour the following achievements:

Additional Honours	
National Awards	Special National Award Certificate
All Finalists	Participation Certificate with Bronze, Silver, or Gold Honour
All Participants	Official Participation Certificate

Who will receive National Awards?

Reflecting IMLC's global outlook, we recognize the top three participants from each country who achieve at least 50% of the total points in the Final Round. These students receive a National Award certificate, and a list of top national performers will be published on our website.

Awards for Ambassadors

Each year, we recognize the dedication and impact of our most active ambassadors with special awards:

- **Ambassador Award for Most Overall Participants** : Awarded to the ambassador who successfully encouraged the highest number of students to join IMLC.
- **Ambassador Award for Most Finalists** : Awarded to the ambassador whose guidance helped the most students reach the Final Round.
- **Ambassador Award for Excellent Encouragement** : Presented to ambassadors who demonstrate outstanding commitment within their communities.

Awards for Schools

In recognition of the vital role educators and institutions play in nurturing talent in machine learning, IMLC presents three types of school awards (non-monetary):

- **School Award for Most Participants** : Awarded to the school with the highest number of registered participants.
- **School Award for Most Finalists** : Awarded to the school with the most participants qualifying for the Final Round.
- **School Awards for Excellence** : Presented to schools that demonstrate strong overall student performance.

How do schools participate to win these awards?

Schools automatically participate when students register using the school's name. Please ensure all students enter the school name accurately and consistently. We also encourage teachers from participating schools to register on our educator platform.

Further Achievements

Engaging in international competitions like IMLC contributes to personal growth and strengthens your academic profile.

Global Network: Successful participants and winners join the international IMLC network: a community of talented, motivated students from around the world.

Opportunities: The IMLC team curates and shares information about relevant international and regional opportunities, including internships, scholarships, research programs, and academic events.

Regional Meetups & Events: The IMLC team will organize meetups, workshops, and study sessions in various regions.

Do I receive a hard copy of the certificate(s)?

Hard copies of certificates will be mailed to all 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Prize winners. All other participants will receive high-quality digital certificates (PDF) featuring permanent verification IDs, accessible via: https://imlco.org/verify

04 SECTION

Process and Rounds

The International Machine Learning Competition is divided into three rounds: the Qualification Round, Pre-Final Round, and Final Round. Each round features unique challenges that test and deepen your machine learning and problem-solving abilities.

Qualification Round

The Qualification Round is the starting point of the competition. It includes five machine learning problems (labeled A – E), designed to be accessible whilst spanning a range of machine learning domains. Each problem is worth 5 points.

To qualify for the Pre-Final Round, participants must meet the following minimum scores:

15 points	17 points	20 points
Junior	Youth	Senior

All participants receive participation certificates. There are no fees or registration costs to participate in the Qualification Round.

Qualification Round Deadline

The submission deadline for the Qualification Round is **Sunday, 13 December 2026**, 23:59 UTC+0. This deadline is strictly enforced, so please plan accordingly.

Solution and Submission Information

Participants must prepare a solution document with written explanations for **all problems**. Participants may submit their solution document in one of two formats:

- Digitally typed solutions (recommended), using LaTeX or a standard word processor.
- Clear scans or photos of handwritten work. Multiple pages must be combined into a single PDF.

It is essential that participants show their work clearly for all problems. Points are awarded for demonstrating a correct approach and solution steps, even if the final answer is incorrect.

When you submit your solution, a participant account will be created automatically. You can access your account and submission using the credentials you set during the submission process: https://imlco.org/login

Announcement of Results

Qualification Round results will be announced on Monday, 28 December 2026. Participants will be notified via email and through their online participant accounts at: https://imlco.org/login

Pre-Final Round

Participants who successfully complete the Qualification Round are invited to the Pre-Final Round, which features more challenging and engaging problems. At IMLC, each round is designed as part of a continuous learning experience, therefore, participants can expect concepts from the Qualification Round to reappear and be applied in new ways to problems in the Pre-Final Round.

This round consists of three problems, each varying in topic, difficulty, and points:

- **A: 1x Basic Problem (4 Points)**
  The Pre-Final Round includes one basic problem (lower difficulty).
- **B: 1x Advanced Problem (6 Points)**
  The Pre-Final Round includes one advanced problem (higher difficulty).
- **C: 1x Research Problem (8 Points)**
  The Pre-Final Round includes one research problem: This problem requires you to read one short research paper in preparation for the Pre-Final Round Exam and to learn about recent results in order to solve the problem or questions. This will give you the chance to get in touch with real-world research.

The maximum score is 18 points. To qualify for the Final Round, participants must score at least 8/10/12 points (Junior/Youth/Senior). Remember that clearly outlining your solution steps is crucial for all problems and contributes significantly to your score.

Process and Exam

The Pre-Final Round begins on **Friday, 22 January 2027** with the release of the research paper for preparation. You then have from **Sunday, 24 January 2027** until **Tuesday, 26 January 2027** to take the 60-minute exam at any point during this period. The exam must be supervised either by a teacher (recommended) or by IMLC using an online supervision system.

You will take the exam via a dedicated online exam platform (https://imlco.org/exam) on a computer, laptop, or phone. During the exam, you write your solutions on paper and scan them afterwards. The research paper will be available in the exam interface. For detailed information about supervision options and the exam process, qualified participants will receive a comprehensive Pre-Final Round information document.

Registration and Costs

If you succeed in the Qualification Round, you can choose to participate in the Pre-Final Round by registering from your participant account.

Pre-Final Round Registration Deadline

The registration deadline for the Pre-Final round is Tuesday, 19 January 2027.

This educational opportunity comes with diverse costs, including those for human resources, technical infrastructure, materials and more. While our sponsors cover some of these expenses, we need to ask participants to cover this year's Pre-Final Round registration costs of 12 EUR to make IMLC on a global level possible.

The registration costs are necessary to provide the resources required to run a competition at this scale, including evaluation, in particular, for the comprehensive Pre-Final Round. There are no other costs involved. The registration costs can be covered with any common payment method available and we will inform all qualified participants about further details. You can find detailed information about the registration costs here: Registration Costs Flyer 2026

Can I participate only in the Qualification Round?

Yes, you can participate solely in the Qualification Round and receive your certificate. However, you would not proceed to the subsequent rounds or be eligible for finalist awards.

Final Round

Participants who excel in the Pre-Final Round qualify for the Final Round: a fast-paced 40-minute online exam consisting of around 30 questions.

The exam covers a range of machine learning domains, drawing from concepts explored in the Qualification and Pre-Final Rounds. It features two types of questions: short-answer questions (1–2 points; a single word or number as response; 1–2 minutes per question) and multiple-choice questions (1 point; four possible answers, with only one being correct; 1 minute per question). Questions are shown one-by-one for a limited time, and you cannot return to previous questions. There is no penalty for incorrect answers.

Final rankings, awards, and prizes are primarily determined by the Final Round score. In case of ties, scores from the Pre-Final (and potentially Qualification) Round will be used as tie-breakers.

Final Round Date

All Final Rounds will take place on Tuesday, 23 February 2027.

Final Round Supervision

Finalists take the exam from home through a secure online portal: https://imlco.org/exam. The exam is digitally monitored using an online supervision system; no teacher supervision is required. Finalists select their exam time slot in advance, with all time slots scheduled in the evening in the participant's time zone.

Details regarding the exam procedure and the supervision setup will be sent to all qualified participants.

Result Announcement

The final results of the competition, including winners and honors, will be announced on Monday, 1 March 2027.

Timetable and Deadlines

Please find the key dates for IMLC below. Note that all deadlines are at 23:59 UTC+0.

Qualification Round

Sunday, 13 December 2026	Submission Deadline
Monday, 28 December 2026	Announcement of Results

Pre-Final Round

Tuesday, 19 January 2027	Registration Deadline
Friday, 22 January 2027	Release of Problems
Tuesday, 26 January 2027	Submission Deadline
Monday, 8 February 2027	Announcement of Results

Final Round

Tuesday, 23 February 2027	Day of the Final Round
Monday, 1 March 2027	Announcement of Results

05 SECTION

Information for Teachers

Teachers, schools, and parents are encouraged to share IMLC as an extracurricular learning opportunity for students interested in machine learning and analytical problem-solving. We provide dedicated tools and resources to help teachers integrate the competition into classroom settings.

Special School Awards

We recognize the vital role of schools and educators by offering special awards to institutions with high participation rates and exceptional student performance throughout the competition. (See Section 3.2 for details.)

Teacher Login and Resources

We invite teachers to register for access to the dedicated IMLC Teacher Portal (https://imlco.org/teacher-login). This platform provides tools to:

- Track students' progress, view results, and download certificates.
- Oversee the supervision process for Pre-Final Round participants.
- Coordinate group registration payments for the Pre-Final Round, if needed.

Register as a teacher here: https://imlco.org/teacher-registration

If you are interested in establishing an IMLC or machine learning club at your school, integrating IMLC problems into your curriculum, or need promotional materials, please visit our website or contact us.

06 SECTION

Ambassador Program

As a global competition, IMLC depends on passionate ambassadors to reach students across schools, cities, and countries. Ambassadors act as local ambassadors, promoting IMLC, helping organize activities, and fostering a community centered around machine learning.

Requirements

Applicants must be at least 14 years old, have a genuine interest in machine learning, and be willing to invest time in promoting IMLC within their community. Ambassador certificates are awarded to those who actively contribute.

Responsibilities and Benefits

Ambassadors take on meaningful tasks, including:

- Encouraging students and youth to participate in IMLC.
- Informing schools, technology clubs, and local organizations about the competition.
- Optionally organizing local events, workshops, or study groups.
- Serving as a local point of contact and ambassador of IMLC.

Benefits include operating under the IMLC name, gaining valuable organizational experience, and making a tangible impact. Official ambassadors receive access to a personal management page and an optional IMLC email address.

Possible ambassador activities include:

- Using social media to share IMLC updates and machine learning content.
- Presenting IMLC to teachers, school administrators, or student clubs.
- Starting or supporting after-school machine learning clubs.
- Organizing info sessions or problem-solving practice groups.

Special Awards for Ambassadors

Each year, we recognize outstanding ambassadors for their dedication and impact. (See Section 3.1 for details.)

Application Process

To become an official IMLC Ambassador, applicants must complete the online application form. The selection process consists of two stages:

1. Submit a CV or résumé along with a brief statement outlining motivation and plans for promoting IMLC.
2. Complete a short problem sheet and submit a motivational video of approximately five minutes.

Apply here: https://imlco.org/application

07 SECTION

Further Information

Submission Status Page

All registered participants receive access to a personal online account. Use this portal to manage your submissions, check your results, view performance reports, and download your certificates.

Access your account here: https://imlco.org/status

Further Materials and Documents

Visit our official website for additional resources that can be used to promote the International Machine Learning Competition:

- Information Flyers (like this one)
- IMLC Posters (Digital/Printable)
- Official IMLC Logos and Brand Assets

Newsletter and Notifications

Subscribe to IMLC notifications on our website to stay updated on competition deadlines, upcoming events, relevant machine learning opportunities, and other important announcements.

Social Media Page

Find us at: https://imlco.org

Contact and Questions

If you have questions, feedback, or experience any issues related to IMLC, please first consult our online FAQ section or contact your regional IMLC ambassador.

You can also reach out to the central IMLC team via email: info@imlco.org

Organizers and Partners

The International Machine Learning Competition is an independent initiative led by a dedicated team committed to advancing education in machine learning. Meet the full team online: https://imlco.org/team

The main coordinators for this year's competition are:

- Program Coordinator: Dr. Rami Aly, coordinator@imlco.org
- Team Coordinator: Fabian Schneider, team@imlco.org
- Outreach Coordinator: Stefan Amberg, outreach@imlco.org

We extend our sincere thanks to all coordinators, volunteers, and partners whose dedication makes the International Machine Learning Competition possible for students around the world.