



**DEUTSCHER
ENTWICKLERPREIS**

Rulebook

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The German Developer Award (Deutscher Entwicklerpreis) is the most prestigious developer award for German computer and video games. These rules and regulations are intended to present the underlying processes transparently and clearly. It describes the processes within the framework of the German Developer Award, the jury work and the various award categories. This document is continuously refined, updated and revised.

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Submission Phase

The submission phase begins late summer every year. Games can be submitted online via a form on the website <https://www.deutscherentwicklerpreis.de/einreichen/>.

The submission phase for the German Developer Award 2024 (Deutscher Entwicklerpreis 2024) **ends on 2 September 2024 at 12:00 pm**. The jury will begin its work from this time.

A submission is subject to a fee from the first category onwards. The fee is € 75 net per category and game and will be invoiced after the submission has been completed. The fee is used to finance the jury's work. If the fee is not paid, the submission will not be admitted for evaluation by the jury. Submissions for the Ubisoft Newcomer Award and the special categories of the German Developer Award, which cannot be submitted directly, are excluded from the fee.

Translated with DeepL.com (free version)

Submission requirements

In principle, all games can be submitted that have been or will be released on the market between 1 September of the previous year and 15 October of the current year. Games and projects are only eligible for selection if the following criteria apply:

1. The game/project was developed primarily in the German-speaking region (Germany, Austria, Switzerland). This includes that the majority of the development and creative team is based in the DACH region and that the majority of the development budget was invested here.
2. The organiser must be provided with a current version of the game by the submission deadline. This version will be intensively tested and evaluated by the jury. The jury is required to examine each game as it is. Please do not submit games that still contain major bugs or are unfinished, as such games do not stand a chance.
3. Games that contain anti-constitutional content are excluded.
4. A game may not be submitted if it has already been submitted to a German Developer Award in previous years. However, there are exceptions (see below in the explanations).

Explanations

- Re 1) If there is no clear answer to the question of whether a game was significantly developed in the German-speaking region, the jury will make the final decision after the end of the submission phase.
- Re 4) Exceptions are all games that were excluded due to technical faults or other reasons in the previous year.

Also excluded are games that have been significantly changed in the categories in which they are submitted. These changes must be explained in detail at the time of submission. The jury is required to evaluate the changed elements, not the game itself. Examples of significant changes are:

- In the gameplay category, a significant change would be if new ways of playing the game were made possible, for example through a multiplayer mode or through new mechanics.
- In the audio and graphics categories, there would have to be major technical changes, or a lot of the assets have been replaced or expanded.
- Adding a campaign or some new elements is not enough to be a significant change, unless the new campaign could be played mostly with the new elements.

Further regulations

1. In principle, add-ons can be entered in all categories. However, the jury is required to evaluate the add-on and not the main game. For add-ons where this is not possible, the criteria for significant changes must be met (see explanations above under point 4).
2. Online games, episodic games, mobile games and other games that have already been submitted or whose release dates back further may also be submitted, provided they meet the criteria for significant changes (see explanation above under point 4).
3. A disqualification must be justified to the submitting company by e-mail so that it can comment on the points. The final decision rests with the respective expert jury. If a game is subsequently disqualified by the jury for justified reasons, there will be no entitlement to a refund of the submission fees.
4. Subsequent nomination of a submitted play: In exceptional cases, a submitted play may be passed on to another category by a specialist jury in consultation with the organiser and the specialist juries involved. If this is the case, the entrant will not incur any additional costs.
5. A specialist jury is entitled to request further submission materials if it considers this necessary for its work. This may be, for example, game scores, a summary of the story or reasons for the submission.
6. Ports of a game on different platforms are generally considered to be the same game. If a port is to be submitted, the same rules for significant changes as described above apply.

Notes on submission in the "Studio of the Year" category

Studios are only admitted to the election if the following criteria apply:

1. The studio has its headquarters in the German-speaking region (Germany, Austria, Switzerland). This includes that the majority of the development and creative team is based in the DACH region and that the majority of the development budget was invested here.
2. The justification for the submission for "Studio of the Year" must be complemented with evidence (sources, links, screenshots, etc.) to ensure comprehensibility and verifiability. The evidence must relate to the last 12 months.

Jury work and composition

The Jury

The jury of the German Developer Award begins its work after the end of the submission phase and decides on all nominations and winners of the German Developer Award. It is made up of the members of the Grand Jury. These are experts from the German-language computer games industry, including journalists and academics. A member of the Grand Jury becomes a jury member by applying to the organiser to serve on an expert jury and being confirmed. Each jury member will be assigned to exactly one expert jury.

The expert juries are defined by the award categories. For each award category there is a jury of 5 members. Each member has many years of experience in his or her category.

To ensure objective work, the following rule applies: A jury member may not serve on a specialist jury in which a game has been submitted in whose development the jury member has been involved in any way. However, as the specialist juries do not exchange information with each other, it is permitted to serve on another specialist jury.

For the following award categories, the expert juries are formed with representatives from external organisations: NRW Award for Young Female Developers, Special Award for Social Commitment and Ubisoft Newcomer Award.

Jury work

Membership of the jury requires active participation in the jury work. To this end, each jury member must commit

- to participate in the jury meetings. These take place online.
- to maintain silence about his participation in the jury and the jury work.
- to play all games in his category extensively enough to enable a well-founded assessment of the game. To simplify the jury work, in categories with a particularly large number of entries, a system is used whereby only the most promising games need to be played extensively by each expert jury member.
- to give a rating for all games via the rating tool and to write a conclusion.

All jury members will receive the games and materials they need in order to be able to deal extensively with a product. The members of the jury will be kept secret until the jury work is completed.

The members of the expert jury will select 3 nominated games from which they will choose a winner. The nominated games and the winning title are recorded by the expert jury in the evaluation tool and the correctness is confirmed by each expert jury member. The expert jury will write up a conclusion for each nominated game.

All submitting companies have the right to view the evaluations and the conclusion of their submitted games after the award ceremony.

Award categories

The DEP 2024 will be awarded in the following categories.

Outstanding Developer Achievement

- Best Audio Design
- Best Game Design
- Best Graphics
- Best Story
- Best Technical Achievement

Main Awards

- Best Indie Game
- Best Casual Game
- Best Game Beyond Entertainment
- Innovation Award
- Best German Game *

Special Awards

- Studio of the Year
- Ubisoft Newcomer Award
- Special Award for Social Commitment
- NRW Award for Young Female Developers

Definitions and Evaluation Guidelines

Best Audio Design

This category examines the extent to which the game benefits from a successful mix of sound effects, music and speech output. A good sound design supports the game in all areas and is never intrusive. The following questions, among others, are important for the evaluation: Does the sound help to guide the game, for example by conveying time pressure or danger? To what extent does it support immersion in the game world? How appropriate and atmospheric are the sounds? How good is the final mix? How high is the variance of music and sounds or how high is their repetition rate?

* Note: This category is not open for submissions, see "Definitions and Evaluation Criteria" for details.

Best Game Design

In this category, a game is judged on how well the game's rulebook, with its freedoms and limitations, works and how motivating the resulting game experience is. This includes the following questions for the evaluation: How well are the game elements interlocked? How well does the balancing work? What challenges do players have to overcome and how are they rewarded? How new and innovative is the game? How motivating are the game loops? How do you rate the usability, game introduction and accessibility?

Best Graphics

This category describes the overall visual composition of the game and the effect of the graphic presentation. Whether a game uses realistic graphics, is illustrative or artistic, the graphics must be coherent and fit the theme and events in the game. The following are assessed in this category: Is the game visually varied? How attractive are the main characters and the game world? How high is the quality of the graphic elements and effects? How are the players rewarded by the graphics and special effects?

Best Story

A good story draws players into the game world and makes them sympathise with the game world and its inherent characters. The story accompanies the player throughout the entire game and can be just as motivating as it is emotionally stirring. This category evaluates how coherent, exciting, meaningful and believable the story, game world and characters are. It also examines how well the narrative path works and how high the quality of the dialogue used is.

Best Technical Achievement

All game elements must be implemented in such a way that the gameplay functions smoothly. The following aspects are important in this category: What technologies have been developed for the game, for example in the areas of graphic presentation, physics, AI, 3D sound or multiplayer mode? Can the game be played smoothly? Are the technical achievements important for the experience of the game and do they set the game apart from other games?

An important note for this category: Whoever submits here must indicate which middlewares are used in the execution of the game. This is because the jury has to take into account which achievements a team has made itself and which come from generally available software.

Best Indie Game ()

This category recognises innovative games that are independent of current conventions and have been developed by independent teams. Criteria for a game to be considered an Indie Game are:

- The submitting studio has developed the game itself and financed it as an independent studio.
- The brand name of the game is owned by the developing studio.
- The game could be developed significantly without the influence of a third party according to its own creative goals.

A game/studio does not have to fulfil every criterion. However, the expert jury is required to assess these criteria in addition to assessing the game. The submitting studio is advised to address any disputed criteria in the submission.

The expert jury also assesses the finished product in comparison to the resources available (team size, development time, funding). Since indie games are more dependent on a committed community than games financed and distributed by publishers, existing feedback can also be used for the evaluation (for example, from forums and distribution platforms such as Steam or Kickstarter).

Best Casual Game

This category is intended to distinguish games that are particularly intuitive and easily accessible and/or that are also suitable for a small pastime in between. The expert jury asks itself the following questions to evaluate these games: How easy is it to get into the game? How well do the learning and level curves work? Can the game be played even after a longer break (a few days) or could the players have forgotten important events or information? Is the game suitable for short sessions (e.g. 10 or 20 minutes)? Are the players quick to get into the action after starting the game?

Best Game Beyond Entertainment ()

This category honours games that use the medium of games to convey effective messages and content beyond pure entertainment. The expert jury has the task of analysing the submitted games according to this additional meaning. They ask themselves the following questions, among others: What experiences, what knowledge or what emotions does the game convey in addition to pure entertainment? Does the game support the confrontation with real problems with these aspects and does the player learn something from it? To what extent are the topics addressed currently important and helpful? Does the game help to question social conflicts?

Innovation Award (Prize money: EUR 2,500)

The Innovation Award recognises games that stand out for their particularly innovative content, gameplay or technology. Titles that pursue new and pioneering approaches, push boundaries and set new standards are honoured. For example, the games set trends that have a lasting impact on the

industry - whether through revolutionary gameplay or the use of advanced technologies. Questions for evaluation include: Does the game introduce new game mechanics? Are parts of the narrative concept unique? Are there technical achievements that surpass previous possibilities? Have bold new paths been taken to offer players an innovative gaming experience?

The Innovation Award is presented by KölnBusiness and is endowed with EUR 2,500.

Best German Game

In this royal category, all members of the Grand Jury vote. All games nominated by the expert juries are eligible for the vote. It is not possible to submit a game in this category. The vote is held secretly via an online tool as soon as all the expert juries have finished their work. The game with the most votes will receive the award.

Studio of the Year

This category recognises outstanding achievements of a studio within the last 12 months and refers to the same period as submitted games. The jury takes into account aspects that are verifiable and comprehensible. These relate above all to the following sub-aspects: Community Management, Social / Societal Commitment, Marketing / PR. Has the studio distinguished itself in the past year through its community management? Was there a special social or societal commitment? Or was a marketing/PR campaign particularly successful last year?

In order to ensure traceability and to enable the jury to make as objective a decision as possible, only justified submissions are considered in this category. All members of the Grand Jury vote in this top category. All studios proposed with the submission are eligible to vote.

In order to also allow submissions from third parties, no submission fee is due for this category.

Ubisoft Newcomer Award (Non-cash prize: Mentoring & IAB)

The Newcomer Award is a non-cash prize awarded by a jury of experts and representatives of Ubisoft. It is intended to reward the best first work. There is a separate entry form and set of rules for the Ubisoft Newcomer Award. The games in this category are judged by a jury of experts and Ubisoft representatives.

Special Award for Social Commitment

This award is intended to honour special social achievements of individual companies and will be awarded by a jury of experts and representatives of Gaming Aid e.V.

To enable submissions from third parties, there is no submission fee for this category.

NRW Award for Young Female Developers (Prize money: EUR 5,000)

This special prize is awarded by the Film- und Medienstiftung NRW. This category honours young female developers who have distinguished themselves through special achievements in the German-speaking developer scene and thus inspire other young women to also take an interest in this industry. The expert jury consists of representatives of the Film- und Medienstiftung as well as former winners.

To enable submissions/suggestions by third parties, no submission fee will be charged for this category.