

Understanding the Qualifying Criteria

Demystify the Qualifying Criteria

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ROBOTICS EDUCATION &
COMPETITION FOUNDATION

SUMMIT

| VEX ROBOTICS PROGRAMS |

Welcome

The Qualifying Criteria can feel overwhelming, but it's actually your roadmap to a smooth season—and it helps ensure **fairness** and **consistency** across all events.



Qualifying Criteria Applies to These Programs

- **VEX V5 Robotics Competition**
- **VEX IQ Robotics Competition**
- **VEX U Robotics Competition**
- **VEX AI Robotics Competition**



**Check it
Out**

A background image showing a group of students at a VEX Robotics competition. They are standing behind a table with a black and white checkered border, looking at their robots. The image has a blue and purple color overlay.

What Is the Qualifying Criteria?

- The Qualifying Criteria is the governing document for all official VEX Robotics competitions, from local qualifying events to Event Region Championships (ERC) and even the VEX Robotics World Championship.
- It outlines the standards, requirements, and expectations that must be met for an event to be considered "official" and for teams to be eligible to qualify for either their ERC or World Championship.
- Think of it as the rulebook for how it works—it **ensures fairness, consistency, and transparency** across all VEX Robotics Competition programs and all events.



Why the Qualifying Criteria Matters

- Ensures fairness and consistent expectations across all events
- Provides teams with a clear understanding of how to qualify for their ERC and World Championship
- Provides Event Partners with clear structure and guidance for hosting their event
- Helps maintain the credibility and quality of the competition experience

A background image showing a group of students at a VEX Robotics event. In the foreground, a student with curly hair is seen from the back, looking towards a display. To their right, a student wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat is also looking in the same direction. Further right, a student with dark hair is visible, wearing a dark shirt with 'KUWAIT' and 'International English School' printed on it. The background is filled with other students and a wooden structure, possibly a robot arena or display stand.

When & Where Is The Qualifying Criteria Updated?

- Living Document found in the REC Library
- Scheduled updates on or before August 1, 2025 and January 17, 2026
- Unscheduled during the season as needed
- Updates are outlined in the Changelog at the beginning of the article

Key Sections of the Qualifying Criteria



01

Event Requirements

- Minimum team count (16 teams for official event)
- Must follow the official game manual, Student-Centered Policy, and use TM software.
- Judging must follow the Judge Guide.



02

Team Eligibility

- Teams must be registered, paid, and have submitted Participant Release Forms.
- Rules on students participating in multiple teams.



03

Judging Requirements

- Events must follow the judge guide (e.g., Judge Advisor, team interviews, Engineering Notebooks).
- Clarifies how judged awards lead to advancement.

Key Sections of the Qualifying Criteria



04

Award Requirements

- Explains which awards qualify for advancement (e.g., Excellence, Teamwork Champion, Skills).
- Describes minimum judging requirements.



05

Skills Rankings & Double Qualifiers

- How unfilled spots roll down to the top Skills teams.
- How Event Region Championship and World Championship spots are assigned/reassigned



06

Region Championship & World Qualifying Spot Assignments

- Regions are assigned a set number of World spots based on team growth and past participation.
- The criteria guide how those spots are distributed fairly.

What's New in 2025–2026

- Clarification between School-Based and Invitational Tournaments
- Judging flexibility for early season events
- Hybrid Event Region Championship option introduced
- New classifications for event formats
- Launch of Conference Model pilot
- August 1 release for VEX Robotics World Championship spot updates



Judging Guidance for Early Season Events

- Early season events in a region may include judging. However, due to the limited nature of most teams' engineering notebooks at this stage of the season, an RSM may choose to limit qualifying spots allocated to judged awards at early season events.
- Excellence cannot be awarded without fully meeting the Excellence Award Criteria





New Event Format Classifications

Each has specific qualifying rules and expectations

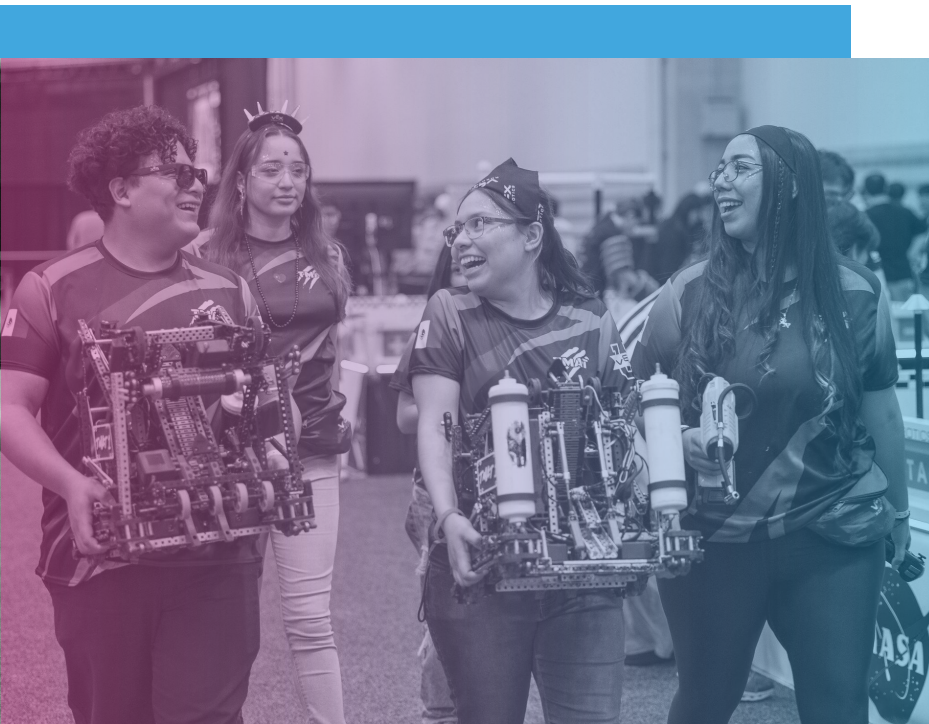
- Open Tournaments
- School-Based Tournaments
- Conference Tournaments
- Invitational Tournaments
- Leagues
- Skills Only Events
- Scrimmages

Clarification of School-Based and Invitational Tournaments

- School-Based Tournaments: Exclusively open to teams affiliated with schools (public, private, or charter). This is verified during the registration process by uploading proper documentation
- Invitational Tournaments: Open to all eligible teams, with selection criteria published in advance.



Common Misunderstanding



“Why didn’t my team qualify? We won an award!”



“We hosted an event with only 12 teams. Why didn’t it qualify?”



Why can’t my last minute event be posted on [RobotEvents.com](https://www.robotevents.com)?
I am getting it in before the posting deadline.



I noticed that my event had more teams competing than another event, but we received fewer qualifying spots. I’m just trying to understand how that decision was made—it feels a bit unfair given the higher participation at my event.”



“My team won the Excellence Award at a Tennessee event that had a qualification spot, but since we are in Georgia. How can I get that transferred to our GA ERC?”



All the teams with higher skills than us at the tournament have already qualified for the ERC. Why didn’t we get a spot?”



My A team qualified for the ERC, but they can’t go.
Can I transfer that spot to my B team?

Tips for Coaches & EPs



Bookmark the Qualifying Criteria and check it each season.



Coaches: Review the event posting for information on judging and qualification spots.



EPs: Work with your Regional Support Manager (RSM) if you're unsure about event setup or awards.



Each region gets a limited number of spots based on team registration, so spots are divided across events as fairly as possible, even if it doesn't always look equal.

Your Experience with QC



Have you used the Qualifying Criteria as a coach or EP before?



What's been confusing or helpful?



What tips would you give a new coach or EP navigating this for the first time?



Was it clear which awards earned spots at your event?



Do you feel like the process is fair, or do you still have questions?

Contact

We are here for you

Event Partners and Coaches are the core of our competition program here at the REC Foundation. Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns. Thank you for all of your support.

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