

The INTERNATIONAL OPEN DOORS  
OLYMPIAD for prospective  
master's and doctoral students

## General overview of the rules



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## General overview of the rules of the INTERNATIONAL OPEN DOORS OLYMPIAD for prospective master's and doctoral students

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### Aim

The aim of the International Open Doors Olympiad is to assist talented, knowledgeable and ambitious foreign students who would like to enroll in a master's or doctoral degree program at one of the leading Russian universities with no tuition fee.

### Requirements for participation

The competition is open to foreign citizens and stateless persons, as well as Russian nationals permanently residing abroad (i.e. having a residence permit issued by a foreign country and not having permanent residence in Russia).

The Olympiad is organized in two tracks - for prospective master's and doctoral students. For the master's track, the competition is open to students having a bachelor's or a five-year specialist's degree or completing these degree programs in the year of the Olympiad. For the doctoral track, the competition is open to students having a master's or a five-year specialist's degree or completing these degree programs in the year of the Olympiad.

No documentary proof of Russian or English language proficiency is required.

There is no age limit and the number of participants per country is not limited either.

During the registration, participants are expected to give their consent to the processing of their personal data.

**More detailed information about the Olympiad can be found on the official website of the Olympiad and its sections [ABOUT US](#), [FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS](#) and [OLYMPIAD TRACKS](#).**

## What do the winners of the Olympiad get

Winners and runners-up of the Olympiad can enroll in a master's or doctoral program run by a Russian university without additional admission tests and without paying a tuition fee. The Government of the Russian Federation covers all education costs. All other expenses (relocation, food, accommodation, communication, medical care, etc.) are expected to be covered by participants.

The universities organizing the Olympiad publish in advance a list of master's or doctoral degree programs, which winners can enroll in, as well as a list of research supervisors to choose from. Winners can get more detailed information on the landing pages of the Olympiad, on the websites of the universities and in their accounts in the Olympiad electronic system.

The winner has to find out on his/her own whether there are vacancies for enrolling in a degree program of his/her choice in Russian universities other than the organizers of the Olympiad. When choosing a degree program, please pay attention to the language of instruction: it can be either Russian or English. If you choose Russian as the language of instruction, you can first take a free one-year preparatory Russian language course. There are no preparatory English language courses.

If you are a winner, you can study at any of the 21 universities that host the Olympiad or any other Russian university. Any of the 21 universities organizing the Olympiad, selected as a priority, will admit you to one of their degree programs. Universities that are not among the organizers of the Olympiad can either accept the winner of the Olympiad or refuse enrollment, depending on the availability of vacancies for admission to the degree program chosen by the participant and/or other reasons.

**A complete list of the university organizers of the Olympiad (including information on the fields of study, cities of their location, campus, conditions of study, residence, etc.) is available [here](#).**

## What do the runners-up of the Olympiad get

As a runner-up of the Olympiad, you have the opportunity to receive a discount on the tuition fee. The amount of the discount depends on the chosen university. You may also take the place of a winner if one of them refuses the right to study or fails to provide the necessary documents on time. The organizers decide which of the runners-up will get such an opportunity after the end of the Olympiad.

## What other opportunities do the winners and runners-up of the Olympiad have

Winners (and runners-up, provided they get the opportunity to study within the quota established by the Government of the Russian Federation) receive a monthly scholarship during the entire period of study. The amount of the scholarship is determined by the rules of granting the scholarship and depends on the student's academic progress (you can check the information

at the university you are interested in).

In some cases, the university may offer some additional financial support (you can find it out by contacting the university of your choice). Accommodation in a university hall of residence is quite affordable (please check the university website for exact information) and the internet is usually free. Most universities offer their students to take jobs on campus or find part-time jobs with partner organizations. The organizers of the Olympiad regularly update the information about these and other practicalities on the Olympiad web pages, and the page on VKontakte. Winners and runners-up can also receive various discounts and bonuses (for example, lower payment for accommodation, free health insurance, etc.). The type of discounts and bonuses vary from university to university.

**More detailed information can be obtained from universities, as well as from the Olympiad page on [VKontakte](#).**

## General information and the calendar of the Olympiad events

The Olympiad is held online. All rounds of the Olympiad are organized in two languages - Russian or English. The language you choose during registration is the language of participation in the Olympiad. The language of instruction is chosen by the winners of the Olympiad after the Olympiad is over and depends on the chosen university and the degree program.

Participation in all stages of the Olympiad is free and is done online. You can take part in an unlimited number of subject areas in one or two tracks. A complete list of Olympiad subject areas (including tracks available, demos and subject programs, reading lists for preparation as well as lists of potential research supervisors) is available [here](#).

As a rule, registration for the Olympiad opens in mid-September, and the winners and runners-up are announced in February or March.

The schedule of the Olympiad may change.

**The schedule of the Olympiad stages is available [here](#).**

There are two Olympiad rounds for the **master's track** and three for the **doctoral track**.

## What is the first round of the Olympiad

**The first round** is a portfolio competition. You can take part in it on any day and time within the schedule specified for the first round.

After registering, you need to confirm and verify your account (a link or a confirmation code, depending on your preferences, will be sent to your email). Once you have verified your account, you need to log in to it. To do this, first, click **LOG IN** in the top right corner of the page, then enter the username and password you indicated when you registered. Then click **LOG IN** again. It is important to click **LOG IN**, not **REGISTER**. The **LOG IN** button is for logging on to the site and the **REGISTER** button is for registering a new user.

Once you have provided the required personal information in your account (name, contact details, and education details), you should click the **FILL IN THE PORTFOLIO** button located at

the bottom of the screen. You then need to attach the required documents in the right places. **PLEASE NOTE** you will not be able to submit your portfolio for review without a letter of motivation, submitted education documents and a completed entry test.

The text of the motivation letter should be typed into the required field (or copied from a text editor), and not uploaded as a separate file. If you intend to participate in several subject areas, you should write a motivation letter for each of them. The rest of the documents are the same for all subject areas.

If you do not have a bachelor's, master's or specialist's degree (for example, you have not yet completed your studies), you can attach any other official document confirming your level of education, for instance, an academic transcript or academic record, an extract from them or a scanned copy of your academic record, etc.)

**PLEASE NOTE** you should provide the information about your level of education and your education institution while registering and creating your personal account and **also** include it in your portfolio.

The entry test contains tasks on the subjects of the Olympiad and is designed to assess the participant's knowledge in the chosen field. The duration of the test is 1 hour. Depending on the chosen subject, there may be 30 or 60 questions in the test. You can take the test at any time during the first stage of the Olympiad. Each participant is given up to 3 attempts to complete the test.

All other documents are optional. However, the more relevant documents you attach, the better your chances of getting a higher score for your portfolio are. In your Olympiad account, you can see the maximum possible score for each type of achievement, which can be lower depending on the results of the portfolio review.

After you have completed the registration, you will not be able to edit the portfolio and it will be impossible to add any data or documents to it.

After the registration is over or the portfolio is submitted for review, it will not be possible to change your subject area. If you want to change or add another subject area, you would like to participate in, do it **before** you complete your registration.

**IMPORTANT:** all documents should be submitted only in Russian or in English.

If the original of your document is in another language, you will have to have it translated by a professional translator who should certify the translation by signing and stamping it. You can commission a professional translator from a translation agency or the Russian consulate/embassy in your country. Sometimes professional translation services are available at the university where you intend to study. At this stage, it is not required to notarize the translation.

Portfolios sent for review are assessed by a jury. There is no commentary on portfolio review results; they are final and non-appealable.

The minimum score for advancing to the second round is based on the results of the portfolio competition. No more than 45% of the participants having the maximum number of points will be invited to take part in the second round.

After the end of the first round, your result is sent to your Olympiad account (indicating whether you can take part in the second round for each of the subject areas you participated in).

Lists of participants invited to take part in the second round are available on the web page of your subject area. Participants are ranked according to the number of points they got during the first round. Participants having the biggest number of points are at the top of the list. Each participant has access only to his/her result. The number of points scored by other participants is not disclosed.

## Preparation for the second round of the Olympiad

The **second round** of the Olympiad is a problem-solving challenge (exam).

Demo versions of the exam and subject programs are available on the Olympiad [subject area webpages](#). The assignments of the second round for the master's and doctoral tracks are the same. If you have chosen both tracks within one subject area, you will have to take the Olympiad exam only once.

During the second round, the performance of the tasks is video-recorded. To prevent any breach of the rules of the Olympiad, the video of your exam will be viewed by an expert called a proctor. The proctor will be able to see you through your webcam and will also have access to your computer screen throughout the exam.

To participate in the second round, you need a laptop or a desktop and a webcam; mobile phones or tablets are not allowed. You can use a pen and paper, as well as a calculator provided the proctor can see them through your webcam during the entire duration of the exam. You must not use any other items and mobile devices. During the exam, it is also forbidden to go online and involve third parties. You can use additional software (Word, PowerPoint, Calculator), if the problem you are solving requires it. For example, you may be asked to do a calculation or write an essay in Word, and then attach a .docx file as an answer to one of the assignments.

Procedural instructions always describe how to complete the tasks. You should not attach any file other than the one specified in the instructions as your answer. It is not allowed to take pictures of the calculations on your mobile phone and attach these photos or scans as an answer to an Olympiad task.

The use of mobile phones is not allowed during the exam.

In case of violation of this or any other rule of the second round (you can familiarize yourself with them in your Olympiad account), your result may be annulled and this decision cannot be appealed.

To take part in the second round, participants are requested to fill out their registration form in their personal account and provide the following information: all passport data, a valid photo or a good quality and resolution scanned copy of the passport or other ID of good quality and resolution for establishing the participant's identity.

Participants who are invited to take part in the second round but who have failed to provide the required information within the established time are not allowed to take part in the second round

The schedule of the second round for each subject area, indicating the time of completing the tasks, is available on the Olympiad website and is sent to your account **no later than seven days** before the date of the exam.

The day on which the exams are given cannot be changed. However, you can choose a time slot convenient for you depending on the time zone of your country of residence.

You are given 180 minutes to complete all exam tasks. You can start the exam at any time during the period specified. When the exam time is up (180 minutes from the time you started the exam), all tasks, including those that have not been solved, will automatically be sent for grading.

Registration for the second round, the schedule of it, rules and instructions for participating in the proctored exam (including technical requirements) and a list of documents required for the registration for the second round will be available in your account a few days after the end of the first round and **no later than 7 days** before the start of the second round. It will be possible to register for the second round on any date within the period specified.

**IMPORTANT:** receiving an invitation to the second round does not mean you automatically advance to the next stage. To participate in the second round, you will have to register for each exam in each subject area (including additional attempts on reserve days). This can be done through your Olympiad account within the established time. Each registration has a deadline.

Below is a list of technical and other requirements for the second round, which you need to take care of before completing the Olympiad tasks:

- Internet connection, allowing you to complete the Olympiad tasks within 180 minutes. It is recommended to use a wired Internet connection (via Ethernet);
- sufficient level of light and low noise in the room where you will take the exam;
- equipment that meets the technical requirements for the exam;
- preliminary testing of the quality of video and audio signal transmission;
- stable video and audio transmission;
- identity documents (a photo or a scanned copy of which was uploaded to your Olympiad account during registration for the second round);

You should also familiarize yourself with the rules of participation in the second round of the Olympiad.

## How is the second round of the Olympiad organized

On the appointed day and time, you should log in to the Olympiad web system. After entering your username and password, you should go through the identification procedure: you should look straight into the webcam of your computer or laptop for one minute and keep your ID, a valid photo or a scanned copy of which you have previously uploaded to your Olympiad account, next to your face.

After the identification, you will get access to the tasks. Tasks are divided into two types:

- closed-ended questions, i.e. questions with options to choose from. You will be given a certain number of points provided you give the answer that is an absolute match with the answer key;
- open-ended questions, i.e. questions in which answers are not suggested, or questions that presuppose a more detailed answer, the correctness of which is evaluated by the jury of the subject area.

You can solve the tasks in any order, as well as edit your answers **BEFORE** clicking the **FINISH**

button. Clicking **FINISH** will terminate the session.

The time for completing the tasks of the second round is limited to 180 minutes.

After the time has run out, the system will automatically terminate your access to the tasks. Only those answers that you have sent **before** clicking the **FINISH** button will be saved and sent for grading. You will then receive a message that your answers have been uploaded to the system.

If during the exam you have a technical failure or a disconnection for more than ten minutes, you lose the opportunity to continue taking the exam on the same day. You should promptly contact the Olympiad Project Office at [opendoors@globaluni.ru](mailto:opendoors@globaluni.ru) and ask for another attempt on a reserve day.

Each request is considered individually. In case of a positive decision, the results of the first attempt are annulled, and only the results obtained on the reserve day are taken into account.

**IMPORTANT:** the number of attempts is limited so as not to give an unfair advantage to an individual participant over the others, and not to disrupt the Olympiad schedule.

Before having another attempt, the participant is warned that it is his/her final try so that he/she makes sure that the computer and the Internet connection meet all technical requirements. No further attempts are allowed.

**Technical specifications should be taken seriously. If you fail to take the exam, you will miss the opportunity to receive the Open Doors Scholarship even if you scored high in the first round.**

Participants who failed in the second round or failed to take the exam may receive a letter from universities selected during registration with a proposal to try alternative enrollment opportunities. Each university has its own options, the details of which can only be clarified by the university.

**PLEASE NOTE** that these options have nothing to do with the Open Doors scholarship, which cannot be received without participating in the second round or without taking the exam. You should NOT ask universities for help with the Open Doors Olympiad.

## Results of the second round and the appeal procedure

The results of the second round will be available in your Olympiad account on the day specified in the schedule of the Olympiad. If there is a reasoned justification for disagreeing with the exam results, you can file an appeal **within two days** after the results of the second round are published. The text of the appeal must contain a clear description of the subject of the appeal and an indication of the criteria, points or rules that, in your opinion, were not met by the organizers.

The appeal should be submitted electronically from your Olympiad account. It will be considered within **five days** after the submission.

To file an appeal, click the **APPEAL** button, which is next to the question you disagree with and fill in the text box explaining why you disagree. Then click the **APPEAL** button once again, this time in the window that you filled in with the text.

To send your appeal, click the **SAVE** button at the bottom of the screen **AFTER** you have

commented on all questions you disagree with.

## Announcement of winners and runners-up in the master's track

After the end of the appeal period, lists of ranked participants are available on the subject pages of the Olympiad website. The names are given in descending order, which is based on the total score obtained during the two rounds.

The total score is formed in accordance with the coefficients that differ from one subject area to another. The winners and runners-up of the master's track are those having the biggest number of points.

Winners and runners-up of the Olympiad are announced separately for each subject area. You can also find out whether you are a winner or a runner-up of the competition in your Olympiad account.

## Third round of the Olympiad (for the doctoral track only)

In addition to the portfolio competition and the exam in the second round, participants of the **doctoral track** are invited to the **third round, which** is an interview with a potential research supervisor. You can find the list of potential research supervisors with links to their research profiles on the subject pages of the Olympiad website.

You can select UP TO THREE potential research supervisors, whose fields of research match your research interests, as well as select the dates and time for the interviews through your Olympiad account.

An important condition for the interview is a motivation letter that should be part of your portfolio submitted during the first round. The motivation letter should explain your choice of the subject area as well as describe your achievements in the chosen field.

To prepare for the interview, please read the program of the interview, which you can find on the webpage of the chosen subject area (along with the demo and the subject program, as well as a list of potential research supervisors). Participants of the doctoral track are ranked in descending order for each subject area; the ranking is based on the number of points obtained during the two rounds. A notification of your participation in the third round will be sent to your account.

A list of participants in the doctoral track invited to take part in the third round and the rules of the third round (including the selection criteria) are available on the Olympiad website **three days before** the date of the third round in the corresponding subject.

The interview is organized using video conferencing software, which you will need to install on your computer in advance and/or test it (the speed of the Internet connection, as well as the functioning of the microphone and the web camera).

You should select your potential research supervisors, as well as the date and time of the interview no later than three days before the beginning of the third round. This can be done in your Olympiad account. The link to the video conference will appear in your account on the day of the scheduled interview.

At the appointed time, you should log in to your Olympiad account using your login and password, go through the identification procedure and click the link to the video conference.

After that, the interview will begin. The interview will be recorded.

Based on the interview results, the potential supervisor will either agree or refuse to supervise your research. If several supervisors agree to work with you, you will have to choose one of them. If none of the supervisors agrees to accept you, you can still be considered a winner or a runner-up of THE MASTER'S TRACK provided you took part in it.

If for one reason or another the interview did not take place at the appointed time, you can book one of the reserve time slots that will be available in your Olympiad account. Remember that you can only change the date and time ONCE for each interview, i.e. in total no more than three times. If something goes wrong with the interview, please contact us on the same day using one of the links given below, in the "Contact Information" section.

The main result of each interview is the decision of a potential research supervisor to assist in and monitor your research. The ranking of the winners and runners-up of the third stage is based on the decision of potential research supervisors. Participants are ranked in regressive order of points for the second round.

Participants having a higher score than the passing score are winners of the third round. Those who scored below the passing score in the second round are runners-up of the third round.

The winners of the third round are admitted to a doctoral program run by the chosen university and research supervisor. Runners-up can only be admitted provided one of the winners for some reason refuses the right to get the Olympiad scholarship. Which of the runners-up is granted a scholarship is determined by the jury and is not subject to appeal.

## **Announcement of the winners of the doctoral track**

Winners and runners-up of the doctoral track are determined on the basis of a ranking for two rounds and the results of interviews with potential research supervisors for each subject area separately. The status of a winner or a runner-up is only granted to those who have received a confirmation from the potential research supervisor stating his/her agreement to supervise the participant's doctoral thesis. Individual results of the third round will be published in your Olympiad account. Lists of the winners and runners-up in the doctoral track are available on the subject pages of the Olympiad website.

## **I am a winner. What should I do next?**

If you are a winner or a runner-up of the Olympiad, you should upload the documents necessary for admission to the Russian university of your choice to your Olympiad account. The list of the required documents, their content and structure as well as the deadline for submission will be available in your account after the announcement of the results of the Olympiad.

## **Contact Information**

Should you have any questions about the Olympiad and your participation in it, do not hesitate to contact the organizers by:

- email to the project office of the Olympiad [opendoors@globaluni.ru](mailto:opendoors@globaluni.ru);
- writing a **feedback** on the Olympiad website;

- [VKontakte](#) social media pages.

**IMPORTANT:** please use only ONE communication channel.

By resending your message, you take the time of the contact center employees.

This will make it impossible for them to respond to other participants who, just like you, may need help.