ISAK Impact Awards 2027

Official Rules, Guidelines & FAQ

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1. Overview & Eligibility

1.1 Purpose

The ISAK Impact Awards celebrate real, measurable change driven by the ISAK community: students, alumni, and faculty & staff. Winners present their stories live at the ISAK Impact Conference in May during graduation weekend, on campus.

1.2 Awards, How to Win Them, and Prizes

There are two kinds of awards.

1. The **Main Awards**, one for each category: Alumni, Student, and Faculty & Staff. Each Main Award has a Silver and a Bronze winner.
2. The **Sub-Awards** are open to all eligible entries across all categories:
    a. Virality
    b. Community Choice
    c. Jury's Choice
    d. Japan Award

1.2.1 Main Awards

Each category has one Gold winner, the entry with the lowest Final Score (see Section 4.1). There are also Silver and Bronze winners, acting as runner up awards. Prizes are:

- **Alumni**
    - **Gold:** international transport, up to three nights' accommodation, and a physical award.
    - **Silver:** a Certificate
    - **Bronze:** a Certificate
- **Student**
    - **Gold:** a physical award.
    - **Silver:** a Certificate
    - **Bronze:** a Certificate
- **Faculty & Staff**
    - **Gold:** a physical award.
    - **Silver:** a Certificate
    - **Bronze:** a Certificate

1.2.2 Sub-Awards

All Sub-Award winners, including the Japan Award, receive a certificate only.

- **Virality Award (Viral Star):** ranked by traction on ISAK's official social media channels, measured up until May 20 (Section 4.2).
- **Community Choice Award:** ranked by community votes after the equalisation adjustment (Section 4.3).
- **Jury's Choice Award:** ranked by the jury's selection across all categories (Section 4.4).
- **Japan Award:** open to projects with a specific focus on Japan and Japanese communities, from Alumni, Students, and Faculty & Staff. Determined on the same basis as the main category awards (Section 4.1) for qualifying submissions.
    - Additional award if an Alumni wins: domestic (Japan) transport, a maximum of two nights' accommodation to allow the winner to present their project in person.

1.2.3 Prize Conditions

1. Travel prizes cover the transport and accommodation described in Sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2, for attending the 22 May 2027 ceremony in Karuizawa. Alumni who present remotely are not eligible for travel support.
2. Prizes do not stack. If an entry wins more than one prize, for example a main award and a Sub-Award, the winner receives the highest-value prize only.

1.3 Attendance and Award Eligibility

For all main award winners (Alumni, Students, Faculty & Staff):

Attendance at the ceremony is required to be eligible for a main award. Alumni who are physically unable to attend may arrange for a remote presentation or submit a pre-recorded message. Students, faculty & staff must attend in person.

Alumni who will present remotely must notify us at communications@uwcisak.jp by April 10.

2. Submissions

2.1 Submissions Window

Opens	November 9th
Closes	March 1st
Late submissions	Not accepted; transferred to the next Award ceremony year

2.2 The Content Mandate

Every submission must demonstrate measurable impact using this framework:

IMPACT = (After – Before) × Duration × Scale

- **Before**: What problem existed?
- **After**: What changed?
- **Duration**: How long has this impact lasted?
- **Scale**: How many people were affected?

2.3 Video Requirements

Length	30 seconds – 3 minutes. Videos over 3 minutes will not be accepted.
Format / Size	Any format, up to 1 GB
Language	Any language. English subtitles required.

Equipment	Smartphones are fine. Prioritise clear audio, stable footage, and good lighting.
Aspect ratio	One video required. A second version (different ratio) is optional but improves virality.

You may submit multiple versions of your video, for example one per aspect ratio. UWC ISAK Japan reserves the right to adjust the content to suit the aspect ratio of each channel. Recommended ratios:

- 16:9 (landscape): YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn
- 9:16 (vertical): Instagram, TikTok

File naming: [ratio].[name].[project].mp4, e.g. 16x9.yalingchien.isaksoap.mp4

Thumbnails: thumbnails are created by the organisers so that every video is aligned with the ISAK brand. Do not submit thumbnails.

Review: not all submitted videos will be posted. See Section 5.1, point 8.

3. Official Timeline

Milestone	Date
Official launch	November 9th
Submission window	November 9th - March 1st
Community voting window	March 1st - March 18th
Announce finalists	March 19
Jury deliberation	March 19 - April 5
Winner announcement	April 10
Viral Star Award calculation	May 20
ISAK Impact Awards	May 22

4. How Winners Are Selected

4.1 Main Awards (Gold, Silver, Bronze)

In each category, an entry's rank is determined for each of three mechanisms: Virality (4.2), Community Vote (4.3), and Jury Vote (4.4). The three ranks are averaged:

Final Score = (Virality rank + Community Vote rank + Jury rank) ÷ 3

The lowest Final Score wins. The entry with the lowest Final Score in a category receives **Gold**, the second lowest **Silver**, and the third lowest **Bronze**.

4.2 Virality Award (Viral Star)

Measures how widely a submission spreads on ISAK's official social channels. Submissions go through the organisers, who post the videos on UWC ISAK Japan's social channels; submitters are then responsible for driving engagement on those posts. Only engagement on the official account posts counts. All aspect ratios are aggregated into a single virality score per entry.

A video goes viral when people who see it choose to share it with their own networks. So we measure two things:

1. How many people shared the video
2. What percentage of viewers that represents.

A video has to do both well. It cannot win on a high share rate with tiny viewer numbers, and it cannot win on raw share volume if most viewers did not bother sharing. Reactions (likes) are counted at 0.3 of a share, so viewer engagement adds value while sharing is prioritised over reactions.

Platform score = (shares + likes × 0.3)² ÷ views, calculated separately for Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Step Up Bonus: to reward videos that spread across channels rather than on one, every platform where a video reaches five or more shares adds a bonus to its total. Virality score = sum of the five platform scores × (1 + Q), where Q depends on the number of platforms with five or more shares:

0 platforms: Q = 0 (no bonus) | 1 platform: Q = 0.1 (+10%) | 2 platforms: Q = 0.2 (+20%) | 3 platforms: Q = 0.4 (+40%) | 4 platforms: Q = 0.7 (+70%) | 5 platforms: Q = 1.0 (+100%)

The bonus is applied before normalisation. Bonused scores are then normalised to a 0–100 scale, where 100 is the top-performing video. For the Virality Award, scores are normalised across all submissions. For the virality rank that feeds the main awards, scores are normalised across finalists only.

Measurement period for the main awards: virality is counted up until the jury vote is in. A snapshot is then taken and used as the virality rank in the Final Score (Section 4.1).

Viral Star Award: virality continues to be counted up until May 20. The virality score alone determines the Viral Star Award winner.

4.3 Community Choice Award

Voting runs March 1st - March 18th 2027. There is one vote per category per verified voter. To ensure fairness across categories of different sizes, an equalisation coefficient is applied:

Equalised Score = Actual vote share ÷ Random chance baseline

Example (illustrative only; 93 is a sample total number of votes, not an actual figure):
Equalised Score = (Votes ÷ 93) ÷ (1 ÷ field size) = Votes × field size ÷ 93

4.4 Jury’s Choice Award

The jury reviews the top 10 videos overall, chosen by Community Vote ranking (Faculty & Staff: top 2, Alumni: top 4, Students: top 4) from March 19 - April 5.

They independently rank each entry per category to determine the jury vote, which feeds into the final winners announcement. The jury also makes the separate Jury's Choice selection across all categories.

5. Terms & Conditions

5.1 By submitting, you agree that:

1. You hold all rights to content in your video, including music and third-party footage.
2. By making a submission, you grant UWC ISAK Japan a non-exclusive licence and the right to publish, post, and promote your video and its content on the school's official platforms, including its social media accounts. This consent is also given in the submission form.
3. If selected as a main award winner, you are expected to present at the 22nd May 2027 ceremony. Alumni who are physically unable to attend may arrange for a remote presentation or submit a pre-recorded message. Students, faculty & staff must attend in person.
4. Only royalty-free or originally composed music is used. Contact communications@uwcisak.jp for assistance.
5. You may only win in one main award category, even if you submit multiple stories. You may also be eligible for Sub-Awards, but prizes do not stack: if you win more than one prize, you receive the highest-value prize only.
6. Once published, videos cannot be edited. Removal and resubmission must be requested before 28 February 2027.
7. Prizes are awarded as described in Section 1.2. Prize details will be confirmed and communicated to winners before the ceremony.
8. Not all submitted videos will be posted. The organisers review every video before it is posted. A video that does not meet ethical standards, minimum quality standards, or rights requirements (such as music), as determined by the organisers, may not be posted and is therefore ineligible for consideration. Resubmission is possible while the submission window is open.
9. UWC ISAK Japan may adjust your video, for example by cropping or reformatting it, to suit the aspect ratios of its different channels.

5.2 Disqualification

The organising committee may disqualify any submission that contains fabricated impact claims, uses copyrighted material without permission, violates ISAK community standards, or attempts to manipulate voting or engagement. This includes buying or automating shares, views, likes, or votes, using fake or duplicate accounts, and offering payment or prizes in

exchange for shares or votes. Engagement may be reviewed before results are finalised, and suspicious engagement may be removed from the count.

5.3 Other

All decisions by the organising committee are final. The committee may modify the timeline in exceptional circumstances with notice to all submitters.

UWC ISAK Japan reserves the right to update these Terms & Conditions at any time.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

Awards and Prizes

What awards can I win, and what do they include?

Main awards (one Gold, Silver and Bronze per category: Alumni, Student, and Faculty & Staff): Gold winners receive a physical award. Alumni Gold winners also receive international transport and up to three nights' accommodation. Silver and Bronze winners receive a certificate.

Sub-Awards (open to all eligible entries): Virality (Viral Star), Community Choice, Jury's Choice, and the Japan Award. Sub-Award winners receive a certificate. Alumni who win the Japan Award also receive domestic (Japan) transport and up to two nights' accommodation to present in person.

Prizes do not stack. If you win more than one prize, you receive the highest-value prize only.

How do I win a Sub-Award?

Sub-Awards are won through a single mechanism: most traction on social (Virality), most equalised community votes (Community Choice), or a jury selection (Jury's Choice). The Japan Award is ranked on the same basis as the main awards, among projects with a specific focus on Japan and Japanese communities. Gold winners are eligible for Sub-Awards, but prizes do not stack: if you win more than one prize, you receive the highest-value prize only.

Can I win more than one award?

No. You may only win in one main award category, even if you submit multiple stories. You may also win a Sub-Award, but prizes do not stack: you receive the highest-value prize only.

Submissions

Can I submit more than one story?

Yes, one video per distinct project. You can only win in one category.

Do I need both aspect ratios?

No, one video is sufficient. A second version in a different ratio is optional but boosts virality.

How does my video get counted for virality?

The organisers post your video on UWC ISAK Japan's official social channels. Only engagement on those official posts counts, so share and promote the official posts to drive engagement. Sharing your own copy of the video does not count.

Can a team submit together?

Yes. Designate one primary submitter; team members may appear in the video.

My impact is ongoing. Can I still submit?

Yes. Show measurable change to date and articulate what comes next.

Can I use copyrighted music?

Only royalty-free or originally composed music. Contact communications@uwcisak.jp for help.

Voting

Who can vote?

Current students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and board members. Email verification is required. One vote per category.

What is the Community Choice Award vs the Community Vote?

The Community Vote is one of three scoring mechanisms for the main awards. The Community Choice Award is a Sub-Award given to the top-scoring entry.

Attendance at the Ceremony

I am an alumni and cannot travel to Karuizawa. What happens?

Notify us at communications@uwcisak.jp by April 10. We will arrange a remote presentation option and present your award on your behalf. Travel support does not apply to remote presentations.

I am a staff member and prefer not to attend. What are my options?

For faculty & staff and students, attendance at the ceremony is required to be eligible for a main award. Please withdraw your application and notify us if you cannot attend the ceremony.

Technical

Can I edit my submission after uploading?

Contact communications@uwcisak.jp immediately, before publication. Once live, videos cannot be edited. Request removal and resubmit before 28 February 2027.

Who do I contact for technical issues?

Email communications@uwcisak.jp with your file size, format, and any error messages.

Questions? Contact us at communications@uwcisak.jp

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