

# Operational Staffing for an IOI Host: A Practical Role-by-Role Guide

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**Abstract.** Hosting the International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) requires the coordinated effort of dozens of operational staff and volunteers. This document provides a structured, role-by-role view of that effort: which positions must be filled, when each becomes active, what they are accountable for, and the milestones that keep preparation on track. It is aimed at teams moving from committee formation to operational execution. The recommendations are grounded in my own direct involvement with the IOI community over many years. As IOI Treasurer, I visited successive host countries in the run-up to each IOI and observed their operational preparations from the inside, and I was also the main organiser of EGOI~2024 (European Girls' Olympiad in Informatics) in the Netherlands, where I was responsible for the entire event from start to finish. The material presented here has been discussed with several past IOI hosts, whose feedback has shaped the content.

## 1. Introduction

The International Olympiad in Informatics is an annual event bringing approximately 700 participants from around 95 delegations to a single location for eight days. A typical edition has roughly 380 contestants (four per delegation), 190 team leaders and deputy leaders (two per delegation), a guide corps with one guide per delegation plus reserve and Superguides, and another 40 or so IOI committee members and host organisers who are present on-site throughout the week. On top of that, the host recruits a substantial pool of additional volunteers for packing, check-in, the airport, the contest hall, the Fun Zone, ceremonies, excursions, and daily transport. Contestants compete in two programming contests while team leaders participate in a sequence of General Assembly meetings that determine tasks, translations, and final results.

While the high-level structure of an IOI (the Host Steering Committee, the Host Organising Committee (HOC), the Host Scientific Committee (HSC), and the Host Technical Committee (HTC)) is documented in the IOI Regulations (IOI, 2021) and has been described in prior host experience reports (Yusubov et al., 2022), and earlier general-aspects guidance for hosts exists in the literature (Matkarimov et al., 2017), the translation of that structure into an operational staffing plan is largely absent. A host team that has formed its committees still faces a large number of practical questions that are not answered by any of

those sources: Who is the single contact point for team leaders in the days before arrival? Who owns the T-shirt sizes? Who posts the departure schedule to leaders, and by when? Who is standing at the airport for an eighteen-hour shift on arrivals day?

This document is intended as a *guideline*, not a prescriptive rulebook. Every IOI host operates in a different country, with different resources, venues, cultural norms, and volunteer pools. The roles, structures, and recommendations described here reflect what has worked well in the past, but they do not need to be followed to the letter. Hosts are encouraged to adapt, merge, or reorganise roles to fit their own circumstances. What matters is that every responsibility described here is covered by someone, not that the org chart matches this document exactly.

The focus throughout is strictly *operational*: how the host staffs and runs the week around the competition. The competition itself (contest rules, task specification, grading, and the internal working methods of the HSC and HTC) is out of scope; for those, readers should consult the IOI Regulations (IOI, 2021).

The rest of this document is a practical staffing blueprint: a map of the roles a host needs to fill, the responsibilities each one carries, and the milestones by which each role becomes active. It is organised as follows. Section 2 describes the rhythm of the IOI week. Section 3 draws the distinction between governance and operations. Section 4 presents the full operational org chart. Section 5 sets out the HOC Chair's ongoing responsibilities across preparation and the event week. Sections 6–14 then catalogue each operational domain and the roles within it, from Participant Care through to Accommodation. Section 15 covers the post-event phase, and Section 16 closes with reflections on scope, what hosts tend to underestimate, and what could usefully be shared across future editions.

## 2. Structure of an IOI Week

For operational planning, the rhythm of a typical IOI week is given in Table 1. The event spans eight days.

Table 1: Typical IOI week programme.

Day	Programme
Day 1	Arrivals. Check-in, goodie bag distribution, welcome activities.
Day 2	GA 1 (pre-practice). Practice session. Opening ceremony. GA 2 (post-practice). GA 3 / first translation night.
Day 3	Competition Day 1 (5 h). IOI Conference. Analysis and appeals. IOI Fun Zone. GA 4 (post-contest).
Day 4	Small excursion. GA 5 / second translation night.
Day 5	Competition Day 2 (5 h). Leader Work Groups. Analysis and appeals. IOI Fun Zone. GA 6 (post-contest).
Day 6	Big excursion.
Day 7	Tech talks / Knowledge Fair. Final GA 7 meeting. Closing ceremony and awards banquet.
Day 8	Departures.

Throughout the week, team leaders attend General Assembly meetings while contestant activities run in parallel. Table 2 lists the seven GA meetings, their placement in the programme, and the purpose of each meeting.

Because contestant and leader activities run in parallel on most days, the host team must operate several programme tracks simultaneously. Understanding this concurrency is essential when assigning operational roles: most staff will need to be in only one place at a time, so roles must be designed around that constraint.

Table 2: General Assembly meetings during the IOI week.

Meeting	Details
GA 1	Day 2 morning, before the practice session and opening ceremony <i>Welcome; discuss practice session and competition rules.</i>
GA 2	Day 2 afternoon, after the practice session, before quarantine starts <i>Results from practice session; general announcements. Leaders need time with contestants afterwards to relay outcomes.</i>
GA 3	Day 2 evening, at the start of the first translation night <i>Selection and Translation of Competition Day 1 tasks.</i>
GA 4	Day 3 afternoon, after Competition Day 1 <i>Appeals from Competition Day 1.</i>
GA 5	Day 4 evening, at the start of the second translation night <i>Selection and Translation of Competition Day 2 tasks.</i>
GA 6	Day 5 afternoon, after Competition Day 2 <i>Appeals from Competition Day 2; presentation of candidates for elections.</i>
GA 7	Day 7 morning, final GA meeting, before the closing ceremony <i>Confirmation of results; elections and votes.</i>

## 2.1 Quarantine

There are two separate quarantine periods, one per competition day. Quarantine begins *before* the contest tasks are handed out to the leaders: contestants and leaders must already be physically separated by the time the GA session starts. The first quarantine runs from the evening before Competition Day 1 (first translation night) until the end of that contest; the second runs from the evening before Competition Day 2 (second translation night) until the end of that contest. Between and outside these periods, contestants and leaders mix freely.

Quarantine affects accommodation, meals, transport, and guide assignments. In the current digital age, full quarantine is practically impossible, but the host must avoid situations where contestants and leaders who know the tasks come into direct contact. Quarantine serves two purposes: preventing leaks and preventing even the appearance of leakage. If an unexpected result occurs, other delegations may recall seeing a leader and contestant

together on the morning of the contest, putting the host, the GA, and the delegation concerned in a very difficult position.

Each quarantine begins at the start of the corresponding translation night, i.e. at the start of GA 3 for the first contest day and at the start of GA 5 for the second.

Equally important is ensuring sufficient contact time *before* quarantine begins. After GA 2 (which covers the results of the practice session), leaders must have time to meet with their contestants and relay anything important that came out of the discussion. The schedule should therefore guarantee a window between the end of GA 2 and the start of quarantine in which leaders and contestants can freely meet.

### 3. Governance vs Operations

Hosts frequently conflate two distinct layers of organisation that must work in parallel but serve different purposes: the *governance* layer and the *operational* layer. Getting this separation right early avoids structural confusion later.

#### 3.1 Governance: the Host Steering Committee

The Host Steering Committee is a small, high-level body whose function is political rather than operational. In countries where the government is directly involved in hosting the IOI, its members typically include a government minister-level Chair (from the Ministry of Education or the Ministry responsible for digital affairs), co-chairs from other relevant ministries (Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, Transport), and the individual who originally championed the IOI bid.

However, government involvement is not universal: in some countries the IOI is hosted by a foundation, university, or industry consortium with little or no direct government participation. In those cases the Steering Committee may consist of senior representatives from the hosting institution and key sponsors, fulfilling the same function of unlocking resources and resolving high-level blockers.

The Host Steering Committee's role is to unlock resources that the operational team cannot access directly: national budget allocations confirmed by government letter, visa facilitation requiring Foreign Ministry involvement, security clearances, access to state-owned venues, and rapid resolution of administrative or political blockers. It does not make operational decisions. It does not set the bus schedule, select the T-shirt design, or determine the contest network topology.

#### 3.2 Operations: the Host Organising Committee

The HOC is the working body, led by the HOC Chair, who holds national-level authority and is the primary liaison to the International Committee. In theory, the Chair's function is not day-to-day task execution but rather holding the overall schedule, budget, and risk

register, ensuring crossdomain coordination, escalating to the Host Steering Committee when blockers require political or financial intervention, and representing the host to the IC. Liaison with the ISC and ITC is handled by the HSC and HTC chairs respectively; the HOC Chair receives reports from the HSC and HTC but does not sit on the ISC or ITC. The day-to-day and week-of-event responsibilities of the Chair are covered in detail in Section 5.

In practice, however, the HOC Chair quite often takes on one or more of the functional coordinator positions described in this document, for example doubling as the Venues Coordinator or directly managing registration. When this happens, the Chair role becomes a de facto day-to-day operational position as well, with the coordination responsibilities on top. This is workable as long as the Chair remains aware of the dual role and does not lose sight of cross-domain coordination while handling their own operational tasks.

Regardless of whether the Chair takes on functional roles, one aspect of the position is paramount: they must have a clear mental picture of how to run the entire IOI, covering all the operational aspects described in this document. Because the IOI rotates each year between countries that rarely host it more than once, almost every host team is effectively operating for the first time, and the Chair is the one member of that team who cannot afford to be. The HOC Chair should therefore have first-hand experience from multiple previous IOIs, whether as a team leader, committee member, or in another operational role. One edition seen from the inside is rarely enough to hold the complete picture; a Chair who has been through several knows what recurs, what changes between hosts, and what the IC and the committees expect. The individual coordinators typically do not have deep knowledge of the IOI as a whole; they know their own domain. It is the Chair who holds the complete picture and who understands how all the pieces fit together. This means they should hold preparatory meetings with the core team well in advance, not only to discuss each coordinator's own responsibilities but to give everyone a general understanding of the full event. When every coordinator understands the whole show, not just their part of it, cross-domain problems are spotted earlier and coordination during the event becomes far smoother.

The rule of thumb is: if a decision requires spending money, invoking governmental authority, or engaging an external institution, it goes to the Host Steering Committee. If a decision concerns how the event runs (schedules, assignments, room layouts, volunteer briefings) it stays within the HOC. The HOC Chair is the routing point between the two layers.

### *3.3 The scientific and technical layer*

The HSC and HTC sit alongside the HOC and report to the HOC Chair, but are governed by the international committees (ISC and ITC respectively). The HOC interacts with them at defined operational interfaces: task translation logistics (Translation Night Coordinator) and contest hall infrastructure (Contest Hall Coordinator). These are described in Section 9.

The HSC in particular operates almost entirely outside the operational staffing plan: its

work (selecting and preparing tasks, producing test data, building graders, coordinating with the ISC) is scientific rather than operational, and is largely invisible to the rest of the host team. For that reason the HSC is not covered in depth in this document beyond the interfaces where it meets operations. The HTC sits closer to the operational side because the infrastructure it runs (network, power, workstations, CMS, printing, the translation system) has to be planned and installed inside the host's venues; where the HTC shows up in this document, it is through those infrastructure interfaces rather than as a committee in its own right. Readers looking for the internal structure and working methods of the HSC and HTC should consult the IOI Regulations (IOI, 2021).

### 3.4 *Adjacent IOI-wide and host functions*

Several roles are referenced throughout this document but sit *outside* the host's operational structure. They belong either to the IOI internationally or to the host's non-operational functions, and the coordinators described in the rest of this document interact with them at specific points rather than having them in their reporting line.

**IOI President.** The President of the IOI leads the IOI internationally, chairs the International Committee, and represents the IOI as its public figurehead. They do not sit inside the HOC, but are a central figure at the IOI week: it is customary for them to deliver opening remarks at both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, and to oversee the IOI Flag Handover to the following year's host.

**IOI Treasurer.** The Treasurer looks after the long-term, IOI-wide sponsor relationships that persist across editions, and owns those sponsor contracts. On behalf of the IOI, they negotiate multi-year commitments with major sponsors and ensure that their contractual visibility requirements are met at each edition. For the host, they are the reference point on anything concerning these long-term sponsors: what has been promised, what can be asked of them, and what is offlimits. The Fun Zone Coordinator, the Branding Coordinator, and the Press & Media Lead all have working contact with them.

**IOI Secretary.** The Secretary handles formal IOI business that the host should not decide unilaterally, most notably the admission of new participating countries and observer countries into the IOI. Requests of that nature are routed to them, not handled independently by the Registration Lead.

**Host sponsorship team.** In parallel with the operational staff described in this document, the host typically runs a separate sponsorship function whose job is to recruit and manage *host-specific* sponsors for the current edition (as distinct from the long-term IOI-wide sponsors, which the IOI Treasurer handles). This team is not part of the operational staffing plan, but feeds evolving sponsor requirements into the operational side as activations are refined. The Branding Coordinator works closely with their counterparts in this team to translate sponsor commitments into visible branding at the venues, and the Press & Media Lead coordinates with them on social media activations and external communication. Depending on the host's setup, this function may sit under the Host Steering Committee,

under a separate fundraising body, or inside the HOC as a non-operational role reporting directly to the HOC Chair.

#### 4. Operational Leadership and Workforce

Operational execution is the responsibility of the Host Organising Committee. Table 3 lists the operational domains that report directly to the HOC Chair; each domain's internal roles are detailed in the corresponding section. The operational interfaces with the HSC and HTC fall under Competition Operations (Section 9); the committees themselves are governed by the International Scientific Committee (ISC) and the International Technical Committee (ITC) respectively, both of which sit under the International Committee (IC) of the IOI.

Table 3: Operational domains reporting to the HOC Chair.

Domain	Scope
Participant Care	Guide corps, medical support
Arrivals & Departures	Arrival/departure schedules, airport operations, check-in venue
Venues & Facilities	Contest hall, GA room, Fun Zone, branding, catering
Competition Operations	CMS, translation nights
Communications & Registration	Participant registration, communication channels, press, newsletter (optional)
Ceremonies	Opening and closing ceremonies
Excursions	Day trips and associated logistics
Transportation	Daily bus coordination between all venues
Accommodation	Hotel contracts and room assignments

This document describes over twenty distinct coordinator roles. That does not mean twenty people are needed. In practice, the main coordinator functions at a typical IOI are handled by a core team of around five to eight persons, each covering multiple roles. The exact distribution depends on the host's team and circumstances, but 4 on the following page shows one realistic way of combining roles.

This is only a suggestion. Some hosts will split roles differently depending on the strengths of their team, and some roles (notably Head of Guides) are demanding enough to occupy one person full-time. The important thing is that every responsibility listed in this document is explicitly assigned to someone. The umbrella Venues & Facilities Coordinator (Section 8) is not a separate row in Table 4: that role is the lead of the Venues bucket, and on a small core team it is typically absorbed by the HOC Chair.

Table 4: Example of how coordinator roles can be combined across a small core team.

<b>Combined role</b>	<b>Coordinator roles covered</b>
Participant Care	Head of Guides, Medical Coordinator
Arrivals & Transport	Arrivals Coordinator, Departure Coordinator, Airport Coordinator, Transportation Coordinator, Check-in Venue Coordinator
Venues	Contest Hall Coordinator, GA Room Coordinator
Activities	Fun Zone Coordinator, Excursions Coordinator
Hospitality	Catering Coordinator, Accommodation Coordinator, Ceremonies Coordinator
Competition Operations	CMS Lead, Translation Night Coordinator, Contest Entrance Coordinator
Communications	Registration Lead, Internal Communications Coordinator, Press & Media Lead, Branding Coordinator

#### 4.1 Guides

Guides are the most visible operational face of the IOI for delegations. Each team is assigned a dedicated guide who accompanies them throughout the event: from airport arrival, through meals, transfers, ceremonies, excursions, and contest days, to final departure. Guides are with the contestants essentially all of their waking hours, and for most participants the guide is the person they interact with most, and the most reliable channel through which the host communicates practical information to the team. When things go smoothly for a delegation, it is usually because the guide is on top of the schedule and knows where to find answers; when things go wrong, the guide is usually the first to notice.

The guide corps is recruited, trained, and managed by the Head of Guides. The role is covered in detail in Section 6.1; here it is enough to note that the guide corps is one of the largest pillars of the operational structure, and that it sits alongside the wider volunteer pool described next.

#### 4.2 Volunteer management

The guide corps is only one part of the host's volunteer pool. Packing, check-in, the airport, the contest hall, the Fun Zone, ceremonies, excursions, translation nights, and daily transport together need far more hands than the guide corps alone can supply, so hosts invariably recruit an additional pool of volunteers, typically students or young professionals drawn from local universities, schools, or community organisations. Guides often help out with some of these auxiliary tasks outside their direct delegation duties (welcoming teams at the airport, packing bags in the days before arrivals, supporting the contest hall entrance check, or staffing the Fun Zone), and this is natural and should be encouraged, but not every task can or should be given to guides.

Recruiting, briefing, scheduling, and caring for this wider volunteer base is a cross-cutting responsibility that should not be left to each coordinator individually. In practice, it is helpful to have one person on the core team who owns the overall volunteer plan: a single roster, a single onboarding process, a single point of contact for volunteers' logistical and administrative questions (where to go, what to wear, when meals are served, who to call when shifts go wrong), and a single point of escalation when something breaks down. For the content of any specific task, that same volunteer then reports to the relevant topical coordinator: packing volunteers work under the Check-in Venue Coordinator, airport volunteers under the Airport Coordinator, ceremony ushers under the Ceremonies Coordinator, and so on. The distinction is between *logistical ownership of the volunteer* (one central person) and *task-level direction on the day* (the relevant coordinator). This person may be the Head of Guides acting in an extended capacity, or a separate volunteer lead; what matters is that the responsibility is explicitly assigned rather than diffused.

#### 4.3 Hotels and venues: decisions that sit ahead of this plan

Two decisions sit ahead of everything else in this document: the **hotel inventory** for all participants and the **competition and ceremony venues**. The ceremony venue alone needs a minimum of 1 000 seats (see Section 11), which is one of the largest physical constraints on the search. These go hand in hand and should be reserved together, because each constrains the other in dates and in location. Both should be locked within the **24 to 12 months before the IOI** window: starting around 24 months out so that popular hotels and venues can still be held, and completing by about 12 months out so that the host, the location, and the venue can all be confidently announced at the previous IOI, and so that subsequent operational work (network specifications to the ITC, A/V contracting, catering tenders) has a stable base to build on. The role cards in later sections quote *Active-from* dates for day-to-day operational work, not for the moment the underlying venue or hotel was first locked. Until the relevant venue coordinators come on board, these reservations are owned by the HOC Chair.

#### 4.4 Preparation timeline at a glance

Table 5 gives a single temporal view of the preparation timeline, pulling together the *Active-from* dates and key milestones scattered across the role cards in the rest of this document. The rows below each represent a band of activity rather than a precise deadline; the detailed milestones for each role sit in the relevant section.

### 5. The HOC Chair's Ongoing Responsibilities

The HOC Chair carries a set of responsibilities that run throughout the preparation period and into the event week itself. Some of them (daily coordinator meetings, the incident escalation path, acting as final decision-maker) only take hold when the week begins; others (the risk register, contingency planning, operational budget ownership) run for the full

preparation period and are referenced throughout this document. The six practices below cover both and should be in place before Day 1.

**Daily coordinator meeting.** The core coordinators meet once a day, typically in the morning before the programme starts, for a 15–20 minute standing briefing: status of the previous day, known risks for the day ahead, and any cross-coordinator hand-offs. This meeting is the single forum where the full picture is visible at the same time.

**Incident escalation path.** When something goes wrong on the ground (a delegation lost in transit, a medical incident, a technical failure), everyone involved needs to know who to call. The default is to escalate within the affected domain first (volunteer → coordinator → domain lead), and only cross to the HOC Chair when the issue spans multiple domains or needs immediate authority to commit resources. Medical emergencies are the exception and follow the direct-to-medical-staff protocol described in Section 6.2.

**HOC Chair as final decision-maker.** During the week the HOC Chair is the final operational decision-maker. When a call needs to be made quickly and coordinators disagree, the Chair decides. Making this explicit in advance, as a normal feature of how the week runs, removes friction in the moment and keeps disagreements from turning into delays.

Table 5: Host preparation timeline at a glance.

When	Main activity
24–12 months out	Hotel inventory and competition/ceremony venues locked (see above). Accommodation Coordinator active.
10+ months out	Venues & Facilities Coordinator and Contest Hall Coordinator active; contest-hall network and power specifications submitted to ITC.
6 months out	CMS Lead active (test installation operational). Ceremonies Coordinator active; ceremony A/V team contracted. Host website carries schedule, visa guidance, and competition rules.
5 months out	Workstation procurement finalised. Fun Zone Coordinator active; Fun Zone layout confirmed and communicated to sponsors.
4 months out	Registration Lead active; registration opens; invitations sent to all countries.
3 months out	Head of Guides, Arrivals, Airport, Branding, Catering, Excursions and Press & Media roles become active. Airport-authority contact begins. Pickup points published on website. First registration chase.
2 months out	Medical, GA Room, Internal Communications, and Transportation roles all active. Visa support processed.
6 weeks out	Data locks: dietary counts and T-shirt sizes exported from registration. First guide briefing. Sponsor items delivery confirmed. GA-room Wi-Fi load test.
1 month out	Translation Night Coordinator and Departure Coordinator active.
2–3 weeks out	Airport site visits. Second guide briefing. Contest Entrance Coordinator active; contest-entrance prohibited-items list confirmed.
Day –3 to –1	Packing, full venue setup, dress rehearsals, medical rooms set up, guide kit issued, final briefings.
Days 1–8	Execution.

**Contingency planning.** Redundancy at the staffing level is necessary but not sufficient. A small number of event-level scenarios should be planned for explicitly before Day 1: the contest hall becoming unusable (power failure, water damage, security incident), a sustained network or CMS outage during a contest, an illness outbreak large enough to affect the guide corps or the contestant group, a venue evacuation during a ceremony, and the loss of a key coordinator during the week. For each, the HOC Chair should know in advance who makes the call, who executes the fallback, and how the decision is communicated to the delegations. The rules governing the contest itself (postponement, partial-day scoring) are set by the ISC and ITC and sit outside the host's scope; the host's responsibility is the operational fallback around them: an alternative hall, an evacuation route, a stand-in coordinator, an overnight replanning window. A short written scenario list, agreed with the HSC and HTC chairs, is enough; the aim is not an exhaustive playbook but that no one is inventing the response on the day.

**Risk register.** The HOC Chair maintains a living risk register throughout the preparation period: a short document listing the risks that could derail the event, their likely impact, the mitigation in place, and the owner of each mitigation. The register is reviewed at a recurring HOC meeting, not filed and forgotten. It is tempting to treat the register as a formality; in practice it is the single artefact that forces cross-domain risks to the surface, because individual coordinators tend to see only the risks inside their own domain. Keep it short (one page is usually enough) and keep it current.

**Operational budget ownership.** Separately from the governance budget held at the Host Steering Committee level, the HOC runs an operational budget covering catering, transport, swag, printing, signage, and the many smaller line items that accumulate during the week. One person on the core team must own this budget: tracking commitments, approving variances during the event when a coordinator needs to spend beyond plan, and reconciling invoices after the event. In small host teams this is the HOC Chair; in larger ones it is a dedicated finance lead reporting to the Chair. Either way, the role must be named before the preparation phase begins. Financial close-out runs on for months after the event, long after the rest of the HOC has stood down, and is itself a reason to appoint a dedicated finance person even when the preparation budget looks small enough to fold into the Chair's role.

## 6. Participant Care

Participant Care covers the welfare and day-to-day accompaniment of all participants, with particular attention to contestants who are usually minors. The guide corps, its management structure, and the medical function all sit within this domain.



Figure 1: Roles within Participant Care.

## 6.1 Head of Guides

**Reports to:** HOC Chair

**Headcount:** 1 Head + 1 Deputy (Communications) + Superguides + Guides + reserve pool

**Structure:** One Superguide per 8–10 guides; reserve pool of 5–8 spare guides

**Active from:** 3 months before IOI

The Head of Guides recruits, trains, and manages the entire guide corps (see Section 4.1). Although the guides themselves are the visible face of the host for delegations, the Head of Guides works mostly behind the scenes: building the roster, managing the reserve pool, running briefings, and handling escalations that Superguides cannot resolve on their own. Other olympiads, such as the EGOI (European Girls' Olympiad in Informatics), have operated successfully with one guide per two or three delegations, but one guide per delegation remains the norm for the IOI given its scale.

The **Deputy for Communications** has one well-defined function: all written communication to and from guides flows through this person. This includes the group messaging channel, daily shift reminders, briefing distribution, and incident escalation. Separating this from the Head of Guides ensures that the Head can focus on operational and welfare decisions without becoming a communication bottleneck.

The **Superguide layer** provides the first tier of escalation for problems a guide cannot resolve alone, like a missing contestant or a welfare concern.

The **reserve pool** is rostered daily; when a guide reports illness, a spare is reassigned immediately.

Guides receive their delegation's flight details, dietary notes, and any language context before arrivals day. On arrivals day, teams collect their goodie bags at check-in.

### *Critical notes:*

- Because contestants are usually minors (as defined by the host country's law), all guides working with them must hold appropriate background checks as required by the host country's national law. Background checks must adhere to the law of the host country, not that of the delegation country, which would be impossible for a host to arrange.
- All members of the guide corps handling communications with foreign participants must be fluent in English.

### *Key milestones:*

- 3 months out: Recruit guide corps; assign Superguides.
- 6 weeks out: Briefing session 1: IOI overview, delegation model, cultural sensitivity, contestant welfare.
- 2 weeks out: Briefing session 2: delegation assignments, contest rules, communication protocols.

- Day –2: Full dry-run of the arrivals procedure.
- Day –1: Guides equipped with badges, shirts, and any other branded kit they need for the event.
- Day 1 morning: Goodie bags ready for team collection at check-in.
- Day 1: Team guides present at check-in to welcome their delegations. A guide presence at the airport is a nice-to-have but is not required; hosts that cannot resource it can rely on the Airport Coordinator’s volunteers at the airport and have the team guide meet the delegation at check-in instead.

## 6.2 Medical Coordinator

**Reports to:** HOC Chair

**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator + contracted medical staff (at minimum: 1–2 nurses on-site; 1 doctor on rapid-response standby)

**Active from:** 2 months before IOI

One or two nurses on-site throughout the programme, with a doctor reachable within minutes, is the baseline; on competition days the doctor must be in the same building as the contest hall. The doctor does not need to sit at the venue: if the venue is adjacent to a hospital or clinic, a direct arrangement with that facility is often more effective, and considerably cheaper, than keeping a doctor on-site all week. Medical staff also cover all excursions, and medical rooms are set up at both the contestant accommodation and the main IOI venue(s). Women’s sanitary products must be freely available at all venues, including inside the contest hall, and replenished daily.

The Medical Coordinator collects pre-declared medical conditions from registration, briefs the medical staff, and is the escalation point for any medical incident during the week.

In a medical emergency, guides and volunteers call medical staff directly; reaching medical staff must never depend on first routing a message through the operational management chain. The notification chain that keeps the management side informed runs in parallel, not as a prerequisite: guide → Superguide → Head of Guides → Medical Coordinator → HOC Chair.

### *Key milestones:*

- 2 months out: Medical staff contracted; medical rooms identified.
- Day –1: Medical rooms fully set up and stocked at both the accommodation and the main venue(s).
- Day 1: Medical room open from first arrivals.
- Days 3 and 5: Doctor in contest building throughout competition.
- All excursion days: Medical coverage confirmed.

### 6.3 Safeguarding

Contestants are minors and the IOI brings participants together across a wide range of cultural and legal contexts, so safeguarding sits alongside medical support as a core Participant Care responsibility. Two IOI-wide instruments frame it: the IOI Code of Conduct (IOI, 2026a), which applies to everyone involved with the IOI, and the IOI Allies Programme (IOI, 2026b), which provides trained community members as a confidential, on-site first point of contact independent of the host. Hosts should support both: brief all staff and volunteers on the Code, make it available to every delegation on arrival, and ensure that every participant knows the Allies Programme exists and how to reach it.

Beyond that, the host is responsible for drawing up and enforcing its own safeguarding rules appropriate to the local legal and cultural context. This paper does not prescribe those rules; what matters is that the host thinks them through explicitly before the event, writes them down, and briefs everyone in contact with participants on them.

## 7. Arrivals, Departures, and Airport

This domain manages all participant movement: inbound on Day 1, outbound on Day 8, and the bus logistics that connect both to the venue. Four coordinator roles cover the domain. The **Arrivals Coordinator** and the **Departure Coordinator** are peers reporting directly to the HOC Chair; in practice these two are usually filled by the same person, since both revolve around airport logistics and bus scheduling, albeit on different days. Two further roles sit under the Arrivals Coordinator: the **Check-in Venue Coordinator** runs the on-site reception point where arriving delegations receive their badges and goodie bags, and the **Airport Coordinator** owns the arrival points themselves.

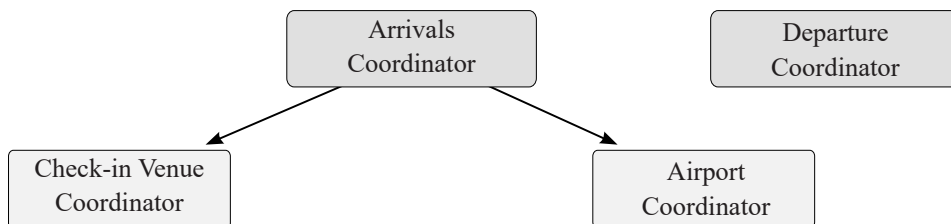


Figure 2: Roles within Arrivals, Departures, and Airport. The Arrivals Coordinator and Departure Coordinator are usually the same person.

## 7.1 Arrivals Coordinator

**Reports to:** HOC Chair

**Headcount:** 2 Coordinators + 1 volunteer assistant

**Active from:** 3 months before IOI

Arrivals day is defined by uncertainty: flights arrive late, connections are missed, delegations appear at the wrong terminal, and a handful of teams will reroute entirely in the 24 hours before landing. The Arrivals Coordinator's job is to absorb that uncertainty so that it does not propagate into the rest of the event. The day itself is a roughly 30-hour non-stop operation from the first early-morning flight until the last bus reaches the hotel, and two coordinators share the shift with clear handover points and overlapping availability during peak hours.

The Arrivals Coordinator builds the **master arrival schedule** from data in the IOI Registration System, which contains contact information and travel details for every delegation. The schedule lists each team's flight number, estimated time of arrival, number of passengers, and any special requirements.

A **clear communication channel** must be established so that team leaders can report last-minute changes (delayed flights, missed connections, alternative routing) directly to the Arrivals Coordinator. This may be a dedicated phone number, e-mail address, Discord or Matrix channel, or a combination. The channel details are communicated to all leaders at least two weeks before the event.

On arrivals day the Coordinator tracks live flight data alongside incoming messages from leaders and maintains a running status list.

### *Critical notes:*

- Arrivals can start well before 06:00 depending on international flight schedules. The Arrivals Coordinator must be available from the first expected arrival until the last bus on Day 1 and must not carry other duties on arrivals day.
- **Early arrivals.** Some delegations will arrive the day before Day 1, or occasionally even earlier, on cheaper flights or awkward connections. The host is not expected to run a pickup service outside arrivals day for them: the rule is that a delegation arriving before arrivals day is responsible for making its own way to a designated pickup point in time for a Day 1 pickup slot. Publish the pickup points, the Day 1 pickup window, and any guidance for delegations that may land earlier, well in advance.
- Be welcoming to all delegations, but the host determines the pickup and drop-off points. There is no obligation to accommodate individual requests for alternative locations or special transport arrangements. A clear, fair, and uniform policy avoids setting precedents that create escalating demands from other delegations.

*Key milestones:*

- 3 months out: Pickup points decided and published; coordinated with the Airport Coordinator's initial contact with airport authorities.
- 6 weeks out: Communication channel set up.
- Day -14: Communication channel details sent to all leaders.
- Day -2: Master arrival schedule finalised; distributed to Airport Coordinator, Transport, and Head of Guides.
- Day -1: Monitor for last-minute flight changes.
- Day 1: Live monitoring from first arrival until last bus.

*7.2 Check-in Venue Coordinator*

**Reports to:** Arrivals Coordinator

**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator + 10–15 volunteers on packing days + 6–10 volunteers on check-in day

**Active from:** 3 months before IOI (procurement); Day -2 (packing)

The Check-in Venue Coordinator runs the on-site check-in point at the venue where arriving delegations are received. The scope is intentionally narrow: the end-to-end check-in process (airport pickup, bus transport, handover, badge and bag collection, delegation arrival at the hotel) is owned by the Arrivals Coordinator; this role owns the physical venue at which delegations receive their badge and goodie bag, and the packing operation that feeds it. From the organisers' perspective, the primary deliverable is the **badge**: it allows staff to see at a glance who has access to which areas. From the participants' perspective, the main deliverable is the **goodie bag**. Every participant receives one on arrival, with the badge attached to the outside. Standard contents: lanyard, T-shirt in the correct size, IOI programme booklet, notebook, pen, national souvenirs, and any sponsor items.

The arrangement above is not the only valid approach. Another workable option is to separate the badge and goodie-bag hand-outs: the badge is issued from the check-in desk, while the goodie bag (labelled with the T-shirt size it contains) is collected from a neighbouring counter, which avoids having to match badges to specific bags during packing. Whichever approach is chosen should be settled well before packing starts, since it changes what gets packed and how bags are labelled.

**T-shirt sizing** is the primary complexity of this role. Sizes are collected through the registration system. The Coordinator exports a size breakdown per participant, orders accordingly, and keeps surplus stock of mid-range sizes (M and L) to absorb late registrations and sizing errors.

Packing begins two full days before arrivals day with a volunteer team of 10–15 people, working from the final registration export. Bags are sorted by delegation and clearly labelled. On arrivals day, each team collects their bags at check-in.

*Critical note:*

Badges must be printed and physically attached to the correct bag before Day 1. Distributing badges from a separate general desk creates delays and confusion when nearly all delegations arrive within a few hours of each other.

*Key milestones:*

- 3 months out: Finalise design of all swag items; place orders (allow at least 8 weeks for custom items).
- 6 weeks out: Confirm T-shirt sizes from registration; adjust orders.
- 6 weeks out: Confirm delivery schedule for sponsor items to the packing location; sponsor items often arrive late and require active chasing.
- Day -3: All items received; packing station set up.
- Day -2: Full-day packing session with volunteer team.
- Day -1: Packing complete; bags sorted by delegation; quality check done.
- Day 1 morning: Bags ready for team collection at check-in.

*7.3 Airport Coordinator*

**Reports to:** Arrivals Coordinator  
**Headcount:** 2 Coordinators + 4–6 airport volunteers  
**Active from:** 3 months before IOI

The Airport Coordinator is physically present in the airport arrivals hall for the full duration of arrivals day. Working from the master schedule provided by the Arrivals Coordinator, their function is handover: each arriving delegation is met, checked off the list, and directed to the waiting bus. Like the Arrivals Coordinator, the Airport Coordinator role cannot be covered by a single person: arrivals day is a roughly 30-hour non-stop operation, and two coordinators must share the shift with overlapping coverage during peak hours.

Some hosts will need to cover more than one arrival point. In Europe, for instance, many delegations arrive by train rather than by air, and in countries with multiple international airports a significant share of arrivals may route through a secondary airport. In these cases the Airport Coordinator role is effectively duplicated: one coordinator (plus volunteers) at each arrival point, all reporting to the Arrivals Coordinator, who holds the master schedule across all points.

The list of pickup points should be published well in advance, with clear guidance for any delegation arriving outside of them; in a large country, delegations can reasonably be asked to make their own way to a designated pickup point rather than expecting the host to meet them anywhere they happen to land.

Buses are *not* pre-grouped into fixed time windows. Instead, each bus departs once it is

close to full or when a natural gap in arrivals occurs, so that delegations are not kept waiting at the airport unnecessarily.

A tablet or printed sheet records the delegation name, expected versus actual number of arrivals, and time of handover. Any discrepancy (fewer people than expected, an unaccompanied minor, an unexpected additional person) is reported to the Arrivals Coordinator immediately.

*Critical notes:*

- IOI-branded signage, clearly visible from the international arrivals exit and displaying a contact phone number, must be agreed with the airport authority in advance and installed before the first expected arrival. This requires a formal site visit, not an assumption.
- If the host country offers visa on arrival, try to arrange for at least two volunteers to be present behind security, near the visa-on-arrival counter. These volunteers should know the visa rules, speak the local language, and be easily recognisable (IOI-branded clothing or vests). Arriving delegations unfamiliar with the local process benefit enormously from a friendly face who can help navigate the paperwork. Always send volunteers in pairs, never alone.

*Key milestones:*

- 3+ months out: Initial contact with airport authorities at every arrival point, including the visa-on-arrival counter where applicable. Access, signage, and volunteer placement behind security cannot be arranged at short notice.
- 3 weeks out: Site visit to each airport; agree signage location and access with the airport authority.
- Day -1: Briefing of all airport volunteers.
- Day 1: On-site from first expected arrival at every arrival point.

#### 7.4 *Departure Coordinator*

**Reports to:** HOC Chair  
**Headcount:** 2 persons  
**Active from:** 1 month before IOI

Departures day mirrors arrivals in length (another 30-hour non-stop span, shared between two coordinators), but not in character. Where arrivals are defined by uncertainty, departures are defined by scheduling discipline: the schedule must be published, locked, and communicated in a strict sequence, and a late or loose schedule cascades into missed flights.

The Departure Coordinator extracts outbound flight information from the registration system and constructs the departure bus schedule. Buses are grouped into departure windows

that account for standard international check-in times (typically three hours before departure).

**Schedule timeline.** Although all leaders enter their departure details in the registration system well before the event, flight information frequently changes at the last minute; leaders often only discover rebookings or schedule changes on their way to the IOI. The Departure Coordinator works to the following timeline:

1. A **preliminary draft** of the departure schedule is ready before the IOI starts, based on the registration data available at that point.
2. The **final draft** is posted to all leaders on the evening of Day 5, immediately after Competition Day 2 concludes.
3. Leaders have until **the evening of Day 6** to raise corrections or request changes. After that the schedule is locked.

Because flight details change so often, expect a significant number of corrections between the preliminary draft and the final lock.

*Critical notes:*

- A late schedule cascades into underprepared buses, stressed leaders, and missed flights. The Day 5-evening posting is the minimum required to give the transport team sufficient time to reorganise.
- Drop-off points follow the host-defined policy established for arrivals; individual requests for alternative locations need not be accommodated.

*Key milestones:*

- Day 5 evening: Draft schedule posted to all leaders.
- Day 6 evening: Change window closes; schedule locked and distributed.
- Day 8: On-site coordination of departures.

## 8. Venues and Facilities

This domain covers the physical preparation and in-event operation of all spaces used during the IOI week: the contest hall, the GA meeting room, the Fun Zone, and all signage and branding across every venue.

**Role:** Venues & Facilities Coordinator  
**Reports to:** HOC Chair  
**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator  
**Active from:** 10 months before IOI

The Venues & Facilities Coordinator is the single point of responsibility for every physical space used during the IOI, from the contest hall through to the ceremony venues and the hotel lobbies where branding is installed. The role does not run any of the venues

directly; each venue has its own coordinator who owns the day-to-day details. What this coordinator does is hold the full picture across venues, resolve conflicts between them (for example between Fun Zone sound and contest hall quarantine, or between catering service points and branding placement), and act as the escalation point when a venue-level issue cannot be resolved within one sub-team. The Catering Coordinator sits inside this domain as well, because meals are organised around venue layouts, service capacity, and the daily programme. The five sub-leads (Contest Hall, GA Room, Fun Zone, Branding, Catering) all report to this coordinator.

### 8.1 Contest Hall Coordinator

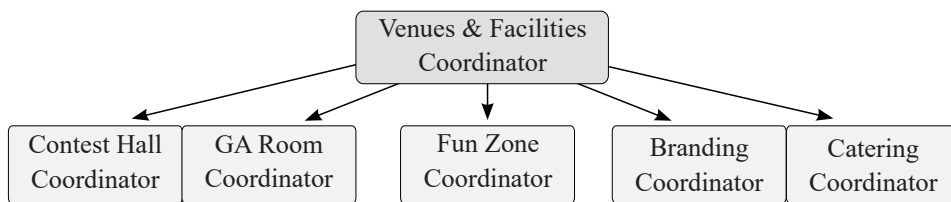


Figure 3: Roles within Venues and Facilities.

**Reports to:** Venues & Facilities Coordinator

**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator + sub-teams for networking, power, and physical setup + a pool of setup and contest-day volunteers

**Active from:** 10 months before IOI

The Contest Hall Coordinator is the single operational point of contact with the ITC throughout the setup period and during the event. They are usually a member of the HTC, or at least in very close contact with the HTC. It is quite normal for different people or contractors to be responsible for layout and physical setup, networking, and power; they should all report to the Contest Hall Coordinator.

Ideally, the contest hall should be ready four to five days before arrivals day, leaving enough time to source replacement equipment if anything is broken or missing. In practice, venues are rented by the day, so setup usually starts two to three days before arrivals day and all testing is compressed into the day before arrivals. HTC and ITC members should be involved on-site from the start of setup; ensure that catering is arranged for them, as they will be working long days. Schedule more volunteers than you think you need during setup: it is better to have a volunteer sit and read a book for a while than to be one person short when something needs carrying, cabling, or fixing.

#### *Critical notes:*

- The ITC inspects the technical setup on-site before the practice session. Budget time in the schedule to act on any findings, since passing the inspection is a precondition for the practice session.

- One or two ITC representatives should be on-site one to two days before the practice session. Final issues are almost always found in the last 24–48 hours before Day 2, and having the ITC physically present during that window drastically shortens the feedback loop.
- Every critical system function must be covered by at least two qualified individuals. Single points of failure in technical administration are unacceptable at the scale of the IOI.
- **Toilet plan.** A toilet plan must be prepared before the contest. Bathrooms must be close enough that contestants do not lose significant contest time walking to and from them. Toilets for every participating gender must be available at roughly equal distance from the contest hall, so that no group of contestants loses more contest time than another. Restroom visits must also be supervised or structured so that contestants cannot communicate with each other or access unauthorised materials. The plan should specify locations, supervision arrangements, and the procedure contestants follow to leave and re-enter the contest hall.
- **Paper and pencils.** An ample supply of blank paper and pencils must be available at every workstation. Many contestants work through problems on paper before coding.
- **Request signs.** Each contestant receives a set of printed signs they can hold up to request assistance: one each for snacks, bathroom, printer, and paper. Signs must be printed doublesided so that supervising volunteers can read them regardless of which way the contestant holds them up. Use a distinct colour for each request type so that volunteers can identify the request from across the hall without needing to read the signs. Prepare one full set per contestant.
- **Snack logistics.** Water and light snacks are provided to contestants during each five-hour contest (see Section 8.5). The logistics of distributing these snacks must be thought through carefully: how and when are snacks placed at workstations, how are they replenished, and how is this done without disturbing contestants? A plan for snack distribution should be part of the contest hall operational plan.
- **Security.** The contest hall is filled with expensive equipment: hundreds of workstations, networking gear, servers, and monitors. This equipment must be secured at all times, both during setup days and overnight between contest days. Access to the contest hall outside of official hours must be restricted and monitored. Ensure that the venue provides adequate security, and that the hall can be locked when not in use.

*Key milestones:*

- 10+ months out: Network and power specifications submitted to ITC for review. (The contest hall itself is reserved earlier, in the 24–12 months window, together with the hotels.)
- 5 months out: Workstation procurement finalised.
- 6 weeks out: Full network load-tested.
- Day –3: Full physical setup complete.

- Day -1: Dress rehearsal: full system test.
- Day 2 (Practice Session): Live trial; all issues resolved before Competition Day 1.

## 8.2 GA Room Coordinator

**Reports to:** Venues & Facilities Coordinator

**Headcount:** 1 Lead + 1 A/V volunteer + 3–4 printing volunteers during translation nights

**Active from:** 2 months before IOI

Seven General Assembly meetings take place during the IOI week. These meetings are chaired by the **Chair of GA**, an independent individual selected by the host country in cooperation with the IC (Regulation S3.3 (IOI, 2021)). They must have good English communication skills and extensive experience in chairing meetings. The host typically introduces the suggested GA Chair to the IC during the winter meeting preceding the IOI. The GA Chair is not part of the HOC; the GA Room Coordinator and the GA Chair should coordinate closely, since one owns the room logistics and the other presides over the meetings.

In principle, the GA room also serves as the venue for the two translation nights, and this paper therefore refers to the single GA room throughout. In practice, however, it often happens that the first GA meeting and the final GA meeting are held in a different room, for example a hall adjacent to the ceremony venue. Hosts should plan for this possibility while keeping the main GA sessions and both translation nights in one and the same room.

The GA Room Coordinator ensures the room is fully prepared at least 30 minutes before each GA session. The requirements group into five areas.

### *A/V.*

- **High-quality audio.** The room must have good acoustics and a professional sound system so that leaders can hear each other clearly during debates and votes. Several floor microphones (not just one) must be available, so that multiple leaders can queue to speak without bottlenecking the debate. Poor audio leads to repeated questions and misunderstandings.
- **Projection.** A projector or large display (or a small number of them distributed around the room) visible to the entire audience, including from the back and when people are standing or walking around.

### *Network and power.*

- **Reliable Wi-Fi.** Do not assume the venue's existing Wi-Fi is adequate. There will be 200+ people working for many hours, each bringing several connected devices, requiring the network to handle 400+ devices simultaneously. The Wi-Fi must be explicitly tested under realistic load conditions well before the event, and the connection must be guaranteed by the venue or a dedicated network provider. Translation

nights are particularly demanding: leaders use bandwidth-heavy web applications for hours on end, and a network failure during translation can delay the entire contest schedule.

- At least two power outlets per delegation so leaders can plug in their laptops.

*Delegation identity.*

- Country name signs and voting sticks at the correct places, verified against a printed delegation list before each session.
- Pigeonholes, one per delegation and one per IOI committee member. The IC, ISC, and ITC distribute materials through them, and leaders use them in both directions: to collect schedules, certificates, and announcements, and to drop off small gifts, notes, or items exchanged between delegations. Pigeonholes must be accessible around the clock for leaders and committee members.

*Printing and storage.*

- **Multiple high-load printers** accessible in or near the GA room. During translation nights every task is printed multiple times for each delegation, so a single consumer-grade printer, or even a few of them, will not cope.
- Dedicated storage space near the GA room for printed tasks and other materials.

*Comfort.*

- Coffee, tea, water, and light snacks at every session.
- **Climate control** must work reliably, including deep into the night during translation sessions. Leaders working through the night must not be left in a room that is either too hot or too cold because the building's HVAC system switches off after business hours.

An A/V volunteer operates under the GA Room Coordinator's direction and owns the projection and audio equipment specifically. The GA Room Coordinator is generally not a member of the HTC, but must be in close contact with them regarding Wi-Fi infrastructure and the translation systems used during translation nights.

As with the contest hall, the equipment and technical setup of the GA room are subject to ITC approval. The GA Room Coordinator should involve the ITC early in the planning process to ensure the room meets the required specifications.

The GA Room Coordinator is also responsible for transferring the printed tasks from the GA room to the contest hall so that everything can be placed on contestants' desks before each contest starts.

*Key milestones:*

- 2 months out: GA room confirmed; Wi-Fi, power, and A/V specifications agreed with venue and reviewed by ITC.
- 6 weeks out: Full Wi-Fi load test under realistic conditions; printer and paper supply confirmed.

- Day -2: Room fully set up: country signs, voting sticks, pigeonholes, power, printers, A/V.
- Day -1: Dry-run of projection, audio, and printing workflow.
- Day 2: Room ready 30 minutes before GA 1.
- Translation nights (Days 2 and 4): Overnight readiness of printers, paper, Wi-Fi, climate control.

### 8.3 Fun Zone Coordinator

**Reports to:** Venues & Facilities Coordinator

**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator + 3–4 facilitators per open session

**Active from:** 5 months before IOI (layout); 6 weeks before IOI (content)

The Fun Zone is a recreational area for contestants. To keep contestants close to the rest of the programme and to minimise additional transport, the Fun Zone should be located as close to the competition venue as possible, ideally within walking distance or in the same building complex.

The Fun Zone is typically open at three moments during the week: after Competition Day 1 (Day 3 afternoon), after Competition Day 2 (Day 5 afternoon), and potentially on the morning with the tech talks (Day 7). The Day 7 session is the hardest to realise: by Day 7, deconstruction of the competition infrastructure is usually already underway, and the Fun Zone venue (if co-located with the contest hall) may not be available. Hosts should plan for this and either decouple the Fun Zone venue from the contest hall for Day 7, or accept that Day 7 may not feature a Fun Zone session.

The Fun Zone Coordinator manages all logistics and coordinates with the Branding Coordinator for signage and sponsor placement within the space. Sponsors will place booths in the Fun Zone, so the Fun Zone Coordinator must confirm the **layout at least five months in advance** to give sponsors time to design their booths. The exact content of games and recreational activities should be finalised six weeks beforehand.

Facilitators are usually teachers. Their role is to help contestants interact with each other and provide a safe, fun, and relaxing environment. Contestants should never be forced to participate in activities. A dedicated **quiet zone facilitator** should also be available for contestants who prefer a calmer space.

Booth space and visibility for long-term sponsors are agreed with the IOI Treasurer (see Section 3.4).

#### *Critical notes:*

- If there is no sound barrier between the Fun Zone and the contest hall, no construction or activity can take place in the Fun Zone during contests. All setup and construction must therefore be completed before Competition Day 1.

- Sponsors sometimes escalate their requests as the event approaches, asking for more space, more prominent placement, or activities that interfere with the programme. It is acceptable, and sometimes necessary, to say no. The wellbeing and enjoyment of the contestants come first. The Fun Zone exists for the contestants, not as a trade fair.

*Key milestones:*

- 5 months out: Fun Zone layout confirmed; communicated to sponsors.
- 6 weeks out: Games and recreational content finalised.
- 3 weeks out: Facilitators recruited and briefed.
- Day -1: Fun Zone fully set up and tested.
- Days 3, 5, and 7: Facilitators present during open sessions.

#### 8.4 Branding Coordinator

**Reports to:** Venues & Facilities Coordinator

**Headcount:** 1 person

**Active from:** 3 months before IOI

The Branding Coordinator is responsible for all printed signage across every IOI venue: contest hall, GA room, Fun Zone, check-in area, hotel lobbies, airport meeting point, and ceremony venues.

Sponsor visibility is only one part of this role. Just as important is that participants feel welcomed and part of the IOI community from the moment they arrive. That means the current year's IOI logo and visual identity should be clearly and consistently visible throughout every venue, so that contestants, leaders, and guides all know they are at the IOI rather than at a generic conference. Branded IOI backdrops and banners should also be placed in photogenic spots at the main venue(s), hotels, and ceremony areas, so that participants can naturally take selfies and group photos against them. These photos travel back to home countries and are a large part of how the event is remembered.

The sponsor hierarchy (diamond, gold, silver, bronze) determines the relative sizes of sponsor logos on banners and other printed material, not the sizes of the banners themselves. This hierarchy must be confirmed in writing before any designs are finalised, and all logo files must be obtained in vector format. The Branding Coordinator maintains a master inventory recording what banner goes where, at what dimensions, and who installs and removes it.

The Branding Coordinator also coordinates with external vendors that deliver booths for the IOI Fun Zone and other sponsored areas, ensuring that booth designs and dimensions align with the approved layout.

Although the Branding Coordinator reports within Venues & Facilities, the role sits at the intersection of venues, sponsorship, and external communication, and draws on three

working relationships outside the venue domain: the **IOI Treasurer** on long-term IOI-wide sponsors, the host's **sponsorship team** on host-specific sponsors for this edition, and the **Press & Media Lead** on sponsor tagging for social media and other external channels (see Section 3.4). The Branding Coordinator does not own sponsor relationships, but functions as the single source of truth for how every sponsor is visible at the event.

*Critical notes:*

- Sponsor visibility is a contractual obligation. A missing or incorrectly sized sponsor banner is a serious issue. All designs must be approved before going to print.
- Remember that the host is in charge. The IOI is an event for the contestants, not for the sponsors. The children and the competition come first. Sponsor requests that conflict with the programme, the welfare of participants, or the integrity of the competition must be declined.

*Key milestones:*

- 3 months out: Confirm sponsor list and sizes; receive all logo files; confirm placement of IOIbranded backdrops and selfie banners at main venue(s).
- 2 months out: All designs approved; go to print.
- Day -2: All IOI week banners installed.

### 8.5 Catering Coordinator

**Reports to:** Venues & Facilities Coordinator  
**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator + contracted catering vendor  
**Active from:** 3 months before IOI

The Catering Coordinator provides meals for approximately 700 accredited participants (contestants, leaders, deputies, guides, committee members, and host organisers), plus the additional volunteer pool, across the full IOI week. Dietary requirements exported from the registration system are provided to the catering vendor at least six weeks before the event.

Although catering sits within Venues and Facilities because meals must be organised around venue layouts, service capacity, and the daily programme, it is in part a participant-care function: individual dietary needs, allergies, and declared medical conditions all flow in from the registration data and ultimately concern the wellbeing of each participant. The Catering Coordinator must therefore work closely with the Registration Lead (for dietary counts and allergy declarations) and with the Medical Coordinator (for participants with medical conditions that affect what they can eat), and should think of the role as serving both the venue schedule and the people inside it.

**Labeling and separation.** All food must be clearly labelled in English, with icons indicating: Halal, Vegetarian, Vegan, Chicken, Fish, Pork, Beef, Nuts, Gluten, and Lactose. Food

categories should be physically separated to minimise the risk of cross-contamination. In practice, most meals will see a large share of participants arrive within a relatively narrow window, so multiple food stations must be set up to avoid queues. Clean, fresh drinking water must be available in unlimited supply for all participants at all times and at every venue. Other beverages (juices, soft drinks) are a welcome addition.

The Catering Coordinator must coordinate with the Competition Operations team so that lunch timing can be adjusted if a contest starts or finishes late.

Several event-specific requirements must be explicitly planned for:

- **Competition day breakfasts** must open early enough for all contestants to eat and still be seated in the contest hall at the contest start time. Allow a minimum of 45–60 minutes between breakfast opening and the first contestant seated. Even large hotels tend to struggle with the IOI because contestants need to eat within a narrow window before the contest starts. After a contest, large numbers of participants arrive together and want to eat at roughly the same time. This must be discussed explicitly with the catering vendor and hotel management well in advance.
- **Translation nights:** Buffet food must be available throughout the night in the GA room. Do not assume all leaders finish by midnight; some will still be working at breakfast time. It is important that leaders can eat quickly before translations begin so the session does not start late. The exact menu is for the host to decide; as a suggestion, coffee, tea, water, soft drinks, and savoury and sweet snacks work well, and hot items such as soup or light hot meals deep into the night are appreciated when the weather or the schedule call for them.
- **Contest hall:** Water and light snacks must be available for contestants throughout each five-hour contest. Snacks should be multiple small items that do not create litter, and clearly labelled as sweet or savoury, gluten-free, and nut-free. It is recommended that all contest snacks are halal, vegetarian, vegan, and kosher, so that the only remaining concerns are gluten and nut allergies. Thought should also be given to the noise factor: the contest hall is a quiet zone, so avoid snacks that are loud to eat or use wrapping that is noisy to open.
- **Fun Zone:** More drink options (beyond water) should be provided during Fun Zone open sessions.
- **Arrivals day (Day 1):** Food must be available until very late at night, well beyond normal dinner hours. Many delegations arrive on late flights and reach the hotel or venue after the regular dinner service has ended. If the catering vendor cannot provide a full hot meal that late, boxed dinners are an acceptable fallback, but food *must* be available.
- **Departures day (Day 8):** The mirror image of arrivals day. Delegations depart across a 30-hour window, with the earliest buses leaving in the middle of the night. Breakfast and snack catering must be continuously available from before the first bus until after the last departure; boxed breakfasts for participants whose bus leaves before the buffet opens are a reasonable solution. This is commonly overlooked and leaves tired travellers with nothing to eat on the way home.

- **Awards banquet (Day 7):** The awards banquet follows the Closing Ceremony and is the last shared meal of the IOI. It does not have to be a seated dinner: a standing reception, buffet, or food-station format works equally well. Whatever format is chosen, it must feel special and celebratory. Waiting times should be kept short. 700 participants arriving at the same time means the food service needs to be fast and well-organised, and self-service stations are a common and effective way to achieve that. A seated format with individually plated courses is very difficult to time well for 700 people simultaneously; long waits between courses, or before the first course, leave a negative final impression of the entire event.
- **Alcohol:** Many participants are underage or come from cultures where alcohol is not permitted. Avoid alcoholic beverages as much as possible, and ensure that glasses typically associated with alcohol (wine glasses, champagne flutes) are not used to serve non-alcoholic drinks. Photos do not show the contents of a glass, and some participants may face serious consequences at home.
- **Hotel minibars** in *every* participant room, including leader rooms, should be locked or emptied before check-in. The host does not want to be invoicing individual delegations for minibar consumption at check-out. Coordinate with each hotel well in advance.

*Key milestones:*

- 3+ months out: Catering vendor contracted.
- 6 weeks out: Final dietary counts submitted to vendor.
- Day 1: Arrivals day catering for all participants, continuously available until well after the last delegation has reached the hotel.
- Days 3 and 5: Early breakfast service; snacks in contest hall.
- Days 2 and 4 (evenings): Overnight buffet in GA room.
- Day 7: Awards banquet.
- Day 8: Departures day catering, from before the first bus until after the last departure (boxed breakfasts for early buses).

## 9. Competition Operations

Competition Operations covers the operational interfaces between the HOC and the scientific/technical committees. The HTC is responsible for the entire technical part: network, power, infrastructure, printers, machines, the contest management system, the translation system, and related systems. The HSC is responsible for the tasks, test data, and graders. The HTC and HSC are also very much involved during the translation nights: they run and maintain the translation system infrastructure and generally run those two evenings. The HOC's role is to ensure that the physical and logistical infrastructure needed by those committees is in place at the right time. Three coordinator roles sit at this interface.

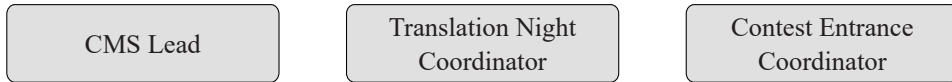


Figure 4: Roles within Competition Operations.

### 9.1 CMS Lead

**Reports to:** HOC Chair (coordinates with ITC)

**Headcount:** 1 Lead + 2–3 technical staff on duty during all contest events

**Active from:** 6 months before IOI

The CMS Lead is a member of the HTC and is responsible for installation, configuration, network integration, and testing of the Contest Management System. The ITC must approve the configuration. A testing installation of CMS must be operational six months before the IOI so that the ISC can verify that the host is able to install and run the system correctly. Two staff members must be on duty in the server room at all times during the practice session, both competition days, and both translation nights. The Lead manages the public scoreboard and confirms with the ITC whether live scoring will be publicly accessible.

The practice session on Day 2 is the final opportunity to identify and resolve system issues before Competition Day 1. Any problem found during the practice session must be fixed before the following morning.

*Key milestones:*

- 6 months out: Testing installation of CMS operational; reviewed by ISC and ITC to confirm the host can run the system.
- Day –2: Full system test with load simulation.
- Day 2 (Practice Session): Live trial; fix all issues before Competition Day 1.
- Days 3 and 5: Two staff in server room at all times.

### 9.2 Translation Night Coordinator

**Reports to:** HOC Chair (coordinates with ISC)

**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator + 3–4 volunteers for print and distribution

**Active from:** 1 month before IOI

Two translation nights take place during the IOI week: on the evenings before Competition Days 1 and 2 (Days 2 and 4 respectively).

Translation nights take place in the GA room (see Section 8.2). Three roles converge on this activity and it is worth being explicit about the boundaries: the GA Room Coordinator

is responsible for maintaining a working room (audio, seating, power, climate control); the Catering Coordinator owns all food and drink for the translation nights as part of the overall IOI catering plan (see Section 8.5); and the Translation Night Coordinator owns the translation process itself, including printing and paper supplies, task distribution, and coordination with the ISC. Overnight catering is therefore *not* owned by the Translation Night Coordinator: they brief the Catering Coordinator on the expected duration and intensity of each translation night, but the food, drink, and service remain the Catering Coordinator's responsibility.

Sponsor branding is welcome in the GA room, but sponsors themselves cannot be present during translation nights. Translation nights are part of the quarantine period: only registered team leaders and authorised IOI committee members may be in the room while tasks are being translated.

All requirements for the GA room (Wi-Fi capacity, display, power, climate control) apply equally during translation nights. The Coordinator ensures the room is additionally equipped with one work desk (two seats, two power outlets) per delegation, and multiple printers. Overnight food and drink service is arranged through the Catering Coordinator. Delegations must bring their own laptops.

They manage the distribution protocol: how draft problem statements are released, how final versions are distributed, and how sealed printed statements are transferred securely to the contest hall.

Leaders should be briefed on the protocol at GA 1. Transport must be arranged for leaders leaving the GA room at any hour of the night.

*Critical note:*

Translation nights routinely extend until early morning. Catering and transport must remain available until at least breakfast time. Planning that assumes all leaders finish by midnight will leave some without food or transport.

*Key milestones:*

- 1 month out: GA room confirmed and fully equipped for translation nights.
- Day 2 evening: Translation Night 1 (before Competition Day 1).
- Day 4 evening: Translation Night 2 (before Competition Day 2).

### 9.3 Contest Entrance Coordinator

**Reports to:** HOC Chair (coordinates with ISC)  
**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator + 2–4 volunteers at contest hall entrance  
**Active from:** 2 weeks before IOI

The Contest Entrance Coordinator manages the flow of contestants into the contest hall before each contest and the practice session. Contestants must not bring bags, phones, smartwatches, or other prohibited items into the hall. The list of prohibited items is defined in the contest rules, which are approved by the ISC. On-site approval of actual items brought by contestants is performed by the ITC, who typically delegates this responsibility to the Contest Entrance Coordinator. The Coordinator translates these rules into a practical checkpoint process and briefs the guides stationed near the entrance to keep entry smooth and calm.

Even with clear communication beforehand, some contestants will arrive with prohibited items. To avoid unnecessary stress, the entry team must be prepared to collect and securely store these items and return them when the contest ends. A simple labelled-bag system (one per contestant) works well.

*Key milestones:*

- 2 weeks out: Prohibited items list confirmed with ISC; storage procedure designed.
- Day –1: Entry volunteers and guides briefed on procedure.
- Day 2 (Practice Session): Live trial of entry process.
- Days 3 and 5: Full entry checks before each contest.

## 10. Communications and Registration

This domain covers everything informational that flows in and out of the host: the data collected from every participating country, the day-to-day communication with leaders and delegations, and the external communication aimed at press, sponsors, and the wider public. Three roles sit alongside one another, each owning a distinct audience and channel. The Registration Lead owns the authoritative participant data and the visa support that flows from it. The Internal Communications Coordinator owns the channels aimed at the IOI community itself (leaders, contestants, committee members) and the participant-facing parts of the host website. The Press & Media Lead owns everything aimed at audiences outside the IOI community, including social media, press releases, and the ceremony livestream. All three report directly to the HOC Chair.

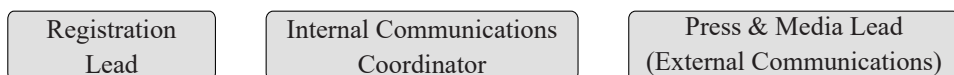


Figure 5: Roles within Communications and Registration.

### 10.1 Registration Lead

**Reports to:** HOC Chair

**Headcount:** 1 Lead + 1–2 visa support volunteers

**Active from:** 4 months before IOI

The IOI uses the IOI Registration System (<https://ioiregistration.org>), which is maintained internationally. The Registration Lead uses this system to manage all foreign participants, including IOI committee members. Invitation letters are generated from this system; countries that require a government-issued letter must be handled via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Visa processing can take up to 30 days. For each country requiring a visa, the Lead identifies the relevant consulate, initiates contact, and monitors progress. The host should pursue visa-free arrangements for all IOI participants where possible.

The registration export is the authoritative data source for the entire operational team. It feeds:

- T-shirt sizes → Check-in Venue Coordinator;
- dietary requirements → Catering Coordinator;
- arrival and departure flight data → Arrivals Coordinator and Departure Coordinator;
- room-sharing preferences and partnered participants → Accommodation Coordinator;
- declared medical conditions → Medical Coordinator.

#### *Critical notes:*

- Registration must be actively chased. Many countries will not register without a reminder. A firm deadline must be set and enforced; late registrations create cascading problems for badges, bags, accommodation, and catering.
- All countries must register through the official IOI Registration System. No country may sign up or be added outside of this system. Any new participating countries or observer countries must first be approved through the IOI Secretary before they can be registered. The Registration Lead should direct all such requests to the IOI Secretary and not handle them independently.

#### *Key milestones:*

- 4 months out: Registration open; invitations sent to all countries.
- 3 months out: First registration chase.
- 2 months out: Visa support processed for all requesting countries.
- 6 weeks out: Export final dietary and T-shirt size data to relevant leads.
- Day –3: Final registration report; badges printed.

## 10.2 Internal Communications Coordinator

**Reports to:** HOC Chair  
**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator  
**Active from:** 2 months before IOI

The Internal Communications Coordinator is responsible for all communication aimed at the IOI community itself: team leaders, deputy leaders, contestants, and IOI committee members. This covers digital channels used in the run-up and during the event (Matrix rooms, Discord servers, email inboxes, and any other platforms the host decides to use), and the participant-facing parts of the host website. The role is not to answer every incoming question, but to make sure that every message is seen and routed to the right coordinator or lead without delay.

At the time of writing, Matrix is the IOI's official communication platform. The host's primary channel should preferably be a Matrix room on the IOI Matrix infrastructure, ensuring continuity with the platform that leaders and committee members already use. In practice, team leaders and deputies often also communicate on other channels: WhatsApp groups, Discord servers, email threads, or informal social media groups that form before and during the event. The host has two legitimate options here: either monitor (or delegate monitoring of) the most active unofficial channels, or make it explicit from the start that unofficial channels will not be listened to and that official questions must be raised through official channels. Either approach works, but the choice must be communicated clearly to all leaders well before the event.

During the IOI week, questions and requests arrive continuously on multiple channels. Without a dedicated person monitoring these channels, messages get lost, questions go unanswered, and participants lose trust in the organisation. The Internal Communications Coordinator triages incoming messages, delegates them to the appropriate operational lead, and follows up to ensure a response is sent.

An important consideration for all IOI communication: many participants and most organisers are not native English speakers. Important information should therefore always be communicated in written form. Relying solely on spoken announcements risks misunderstanding; written messages can be re-read, translated, and forwarded within delegations.

**IOI host website.** The Internal Communications Coordinator also owns the IOI host website. A first version showing the dates of the IOI and airport information should be online before IOI  $n-1$  (the edition preceding the one being organised).

In the months leading up to the IOI, the audience of the website is explicitly the IOI community: participants, leaders, deputies, contestants, and the parents of contestants. They need practical information about travel, visas, schedule, competition rules, and the grading environment, and the website content should be written with that audience in mind.

Once the event has started, the website additionally serves the wider community (press, public, sponsors, alumni), and carries live information of public interest: scoreboard links, published tasks, and daily updates. The website should be updated at least daily during the IOI week. A link to the live scoreboard should appear immediately before each contest day, and the full text of all tasks and translations should be published immediately after each competition day ends. Publication of any contest-related material (scoreboard links, tasks, test data) must be approved by the ISC before it goes live. Items that primarily target the outside world (press announcements, social media posts, highlight coverage) are forwarded to the Press & Media Lead.

*Key milestones:*

- Before IOI  $n-1$ : First version of host website online with dates and airport information.
- 6 months out: Website updated with schedule, visa guidelines, competition rules, and grading environment.
- 2 months out: Communication platforms selected and configured (Matrix rooms on IOI infrastructure, dedicated email addresses).
- 6 weeks out: Channel details communicated to all team leaders and IOI committee members.
- Days 1–8: Continuous monitoring and triage of all channels; daily website updates including scoreboard links and task publications (with ISC approval).

*10.3 Press & Media Lead (External Communications)*

**Reports to:** HOC Chair

**Headcount:** 1 Lead + 2 writers/photographers + 1 livestream technician (optional)

**Active from:** 3 months before IOI

The Press & Media Lead owns all communication aimed at audiences outside the IOI community: general press, the wider public, sponsors, alumni, and anyone following the IOI from the sidelines. The main channels for which they are responsible are social media, press releases, local media coverage of ceremonies, and the public-facing parts of the host website (which are owned by the Internal Communications Coordinator, with content relevant to the outside world fed over by the Press & Media Lead).

**Social media.** Social media has become the primary external communication channel for recent IOIs. The Press & Media Lead maintains the event’s social media presence before, during, and after the IOI, with daily posts covering arrivals, ceremonies, contest days, excursions, and the closing events. Posts must be coordinated with the Branding Coordinator: sponsors have contractual visibility requirements that extend to social media, and all official posts must tag the relevant sponsors according to the agreed sponsor hierarchy. The Branding Coordinator maintains the list of sponsor handles and tagging requirements.

**Daily newsletter (optional).** Historically, hosts produced a printed daily newsletter distributed at breakfast. Recent IOIs have largely moved away from this: printing several hundred colour copies each morning is expensive and much of the audience now prefers digital updates. A host may still choose to produce a daily newsletter, printed or digital, and the option remains entirely reasonable, but it should be treated as one possible format among many rather than a required deliverable.

**Livestream.** Two distinct kinds of livestream should be considered separately.

The *contest livestream* covers the competition days (live scoreboard, cut-ins from the contest hall, commentary) and is what the IOI community has traditionally called “the livestream”. It is entirely optional, and most hosts should not attempt it: producing it well requires broadcastgrade capabilities on top of the contest data feed, and at recent IOIs it has only been realised when a dedicated community volunteer happened to be available to run it together with a local production company. In practice, hosts have found the effort-to-reward ratio unfavourable unless such a volunteer is already in place.

The *ceremony livestream* covers the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. Technically this is much closer to a standard event livestream, and can usually be delivered by the same A/V contractor who runs the ceremonies themselves. For most audiences outside the IOI community, such as contestants’ families, schools, and general press, the ceremony livestream is actually the more important of the two: it is the moment the event is most watchable from the outside. Hosts should therefore plan to livestream the Opening and Closing Ceremonies even if they decide not to attempt a contest livestream.

**Press on-site.** Local media attending the ceremonies are managed by this lead, with a designated accreditation process and a dedicated media zone at the ceremony venues.

**Photo and video material.** The host should produce high-quality photography and video of the IOI week, both as a contemporaneous record and for the Closing Ceremony highlight reel and photo compilation. After the event, selected photo and video material should be published through appropriate channels: social media, specialised photo and video platforms, and selected items on the host website. Publishing the entire archive on the host website is neither necessary nor always desirable; not all material will be of suitable technical quality or appropriate for unrestricted publication, and curation is part of the job.

The Closing Ceremony highlight reel and photo compilation require the photography and video team to actively collect material throughout the week with those deliverables in mind, not only for daily coverage and the archive.

Key milestones:

- 3 months out: Social media presence set up; livestream arrangement confirmed (or decision taken not to livestream).
- 6 weeks out: Editorial and social media plan approved; newsletter format decided (if produced).
- Days 1–8: Daily social media coverage; daily newsletter (if produced).

- Day 7 morning: Highlight movies and photo compilation ready for Closing Ceremony.
- Post-IOI: Curated selection of photo and video material published via appropriate channels.

## 11. Ceremonies

**Role:** Ceremonies Coordinator

**Reports to:** HOC Chair

**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator + A/V and production team (may be contracted) + a team of ushers and floor volunteers for both ceremonies

**Active from:** 6 months before IOI

The Opening Ceremony on Day 2 and the Closing Ceremony on Day 7 require a venue with a minimum of 1 000 seats. At IOI scale this figure is a floor, not a target: once guides, host volunteers, local dignitaries, sponsors, and press are added to the roughly 700 participants, 1 000 seats fills quickly. Both ceremonies are among the most visible moments of the IOI and reflect directly on the host country. Both ceremonies require a team of volunteers for ushering, seating control, and managing the flow of participants on and off the stage; this volunteer team should be planned and briefed for both ceremonies, not just the opening.

**Opening Ceremony (Day 2)** includes the naming of individual delegations while their photos are shown on screen, welcome speeches, music, dance or other entertainment, and the official start of the competition. It is customary for the IOI President to give a short opening speech; the Ceremonies Coordinator confirms their slot in the running order and briefs them on timing well before the day.

Delegations like to sit together. With an audience of this size it is worth assigning seats per team in advance: it makes filling the room fast and predictable, and ensures that no participant is pushed away from their delegation just because the seats next to them have already filled up.

The ceremony should be supported by clear on-screen background presentation (names and titles of speakers, segment titles, delegation names) and by professional event moderation. A printed programme is optional: it is useful for some audiences, but most copies end up discarded at the end of the ceremony, and a well-run show with good background presentation does the same job without the waste.

**Interpretation.** The working language of the IOI is English, but host officials, ministers, and other dignitaries may speak in the host country's language, and local press coverage of the ceremonies is usually conducted locally. For any non-English speeches in the running order, the Ceremonies Coordinator arranges live interpretation or pre-translated scripts with on-screen subtitles into English, and a short English-language summary is made available for local press who do not cover the IOI in English.

**Closing Ceremony (Day 7)** includes the medal presentation and the IOI Flag Handover to the following year's host country. The IOI President oversees the Flag Handover and typically addresses the closing audience as well. A highlight video reel of the IOI week should be screened at the start of the ceremony.

Of all the group sessions during the week, the Closing Ceremony is arguably the most important: it is what the contestants have worked towards, and it is the moment they will carry home with them. Keep the focus firmly on the contestants. Speeches, sponsor moments, and dignitary appearances should be tightly controlled so that nothing competes with the medal presentation and the recognition of the participants themselves.

Guides are an integral part of both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. By the end of the week they are usually considered part of the delegation by the teams.

*Critical notes:*

- Speeches at both ceremonies should be short, and speakers should be explicitly asked to tailor their remarks towards the contestants. The audience is predominantly international secondary-school-aged contestants and their coaches. At the Opening Ceremony many will be jet-lagged, and at the Closing Ceremony they will be eager for medals, not speeches. Presenters must be briefed accordingly.
- At the IOI, 50% of contestants receive a medal. This means a large number of contestants will be called forward during the Closing Ceremony. Medal winners should be placed in assigned seats in a smart order so they can be called forward efficiently. The seating plan for medal winners is a key deliverable. To keep the ceremony moving, contestants are called up in groups of 8–12 per group for bronze and silver medals. Only the final 3–5 medal winners (typically the top gold medallists) are called up individually.
- **Medal presenters:** Government officials, sponsors, and other dignitaries will typically want to hand out some of the medals. A plan must be prepared well in advance specifying which important persons will present which medal groups. This requires coordination with the Host Steering Committee, the host sponsorship team (for host-specific sponsors) and the IOI Treasurer (for long-term IOI-wide sponsors), and the Branding Coordinator, and the plan must be confirmed and rehearsed before the ceremony.
- Medals must be ready before the Closing Ceremony. The exact cut-off is not known until after the results are finalised. Always produce significantly more medals than the minimum estimate, and ensure that ties at the top are covered.
- The Closing Ceremony also hosts the Distinguished Service Award (DSA) if one or more are given that year. There can be more than one DSA recipient. Confirm with the IC well in advance how many DSAs will be presented and plan the ceremony segment accordingly.
- **Stage visibility.** Contestants on stage must not be blocked from view by other contestants. Some contestants will try to bring large props on stage: stuffed animals, mascots, sombreros, or large flags. These items must be taken from the contestant

before they walk on stage and returned afterwards. Flags should be draped around contestants' shoulders rather than held up in front of others.

*Key milestones:*

- 6 months out: A/V production team contracted. (The ceremony venue itself is reserved earlier, in the 24–12 month window, together with the hotels.)
- 1 month out: Running orders drafted and approved.
- Day –1: A/V and volunteer walk-through of Opening Ceremony.
- Day 2: Opening Ceremony.
- Day 7 morning: Medal winner seating plan finalised.
- Day 7: Closing Ceremony and IOI Flag Handover.

## 12. Excursions

**Role:** Excursions Coordinator

**Reports to:** HOC Chair

**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator; guides serve as on-site escorts

**Active from:** 3 months before IOI

The Excursions Coordinator organises excursions, arranges tickets and entrance logistics, and coordinates closely with the Transportation Coordinator (for buses) and the Catering Coordinator (for meals). If an excursion is running late (for example due to traffic) the Catering Coordinator must be informed immediately so that meals can be delayed accordingly.

IOI committee members do not always participate in excursions and other programme activities. The Excursions Coordinator should confirm attendance with committee members in advance to ensure accurate headcounts for transport, catering, and entrance logistics.

Two excursions take place during the IOI week.

**Day 4: Small excursion.** Must return to accommodation before dinner. Leaders face a full night of translation immediately after; an excursion that runs into the evening will leave them exhausted before a difficult night. The contestants also still have an entire second competition day ahead of them and many will be focused on that: the Day 4 excursion should be light enough that nobody arrives at Competition Day 2 tired or injured, and it should not include activities that contestants may reasonably feel are too risky or too exhausting the day before their second contest.

**Day 6: Big excursion.** A full-day event; no translation constraint applies. Separate programmes for adults and contestants are possible.

A head count must be taken before every departure and after every return. Guides do not leave any excursion site without confirming the full complement of their delegation.

**Medical safety net.** Excursions take participants away from the main venue where the medical room is staffed. The Excursions Coordinator must plan the medical support structure for each excursion in advance: which medical staff or first-aid trained volunteers will accompany the group, what the nearest hospital is at each excursion location, and how an emergency evacuation would work. This planning must be completed and reviewed with the Medical Coordinator well before the excursion days.

*Key milestones:*

- 3+ months out: Excursion routes confirmed; tickets and logistics arranged; bus requirements communicated to Transportation Coordinator. Group-rate tickets and entrance arrangements at popular sites often need to be booked earlier than this.
- 1 month out: Guides briefed on excursion content.
- Day 4: Small excursion (must return before dinner).
- Day 6: Big excursion.

### 13. Transportation

**Role:** Transportation Coordinator  
**Reports to:** HOC Chair  
**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator  
**Active from:** 2 months before IOI

The Transportation Coordinator ensures that participants are where they need to be, every day of the IOI week. In many hosts the same bus contractor (and, in small teams, the same person) handles arrivals, departures, and daily transport, and this is entirely workable for the run-up and post-event phases. During the IOI week itself, however, the daily transport load is heavy enough that it benefits from dedicated focus: a single person trying to cover arrivals, departures, and the daily programme simultaneously will struggle on peak days. In practice, many hosts split the role during the event week even if it is held by one person before and after, and that is the arrangement recommended here.

The cheapest, simplest, and most reliable transport is no transport at all. Where the accommodation, contest venue, GA room, and ceremony venue sit on or near the same site, daily bus operations disappear almost entirely, and excursion programmes can be chosen to minimise additional bussing as well. Hosts should consider this early, at the venue-selection stage: saving transportation load is usually far more valuable than any gain from spreading venues across a city.

Daily responsibilities include coordinating buses between hotels and the competition venue, the ceremony venue, excursion departure points, and any other event locations. The Transportation Coordinator works from a master schedule that reflects the IOI programme and adjusts in real time when events run late, excursions are delayed, or ad-hoc transport needs arise.

Close coordination with the Excursions Coordinator and the Catering Coordinator is essential: if transport is delayed, downstream schedules for meals and activities must be adjusted accordingly.

Loading buses for large groups takes a surprising amount of time, and needs to be accounted for in every schedule. Be transparent about the exact time people are expected to be ready and the exact time buses are scheduled to leave. By departing on time from the very beginning of the week, you train the teams to be punctual.

The temperature on the buses should be friendly to the passengers. This may involve discussing with the drivers to start the climate control before the participants head back to the bus.

**Bus boarding discipline.** Guides must be actively involved in getting people on and off buses. Without a clear boarding plan, 700 participants will self-organise chaotically, leading to delays and lost delegations. The Transportation Coordinator must decide on a boarding policy beforehand: either buses are assigned to specific delegations, only complete teams accompanied by their guide may board a bus, or any other structured mechanism that can be monitored. Whichever approach is chosen, it must be communicated to all Superguides and guides and enforced consistently from Day 1. A word of caution, however: over-engineering an inflexible boarding system can cause as much chaos as having no plan at all. If the system is too rigid (for example requiring every delegation to queue at a specific bus in a specific order), any small disruption (a late delegation, a changed bus) cascades into delays for everyone. The best boarding plans are simple, easy to communicate, and flexible enough to absorb the inevitable deviations of a live event.

*Key milestones:*

- 2 months out: Bus company contracted; route plans drafted.
- 1 month out: Daily transport schedule drafted based on IOI programme.
- Day -1: Final transport schedule distributed to all coordinators and guides.
- Days 1-8: Daily transport coordination.

## 14. Accommodation

**Role:** Accommodation Coordinator

**Reports to:** HOC Chair

**Headcount:** 1 Coordinator

**Active from:** 24 months before IOI (hotel inventory secured in the 24-12 month window, together with the venues)

The Accommodation Coordinator manages all hotel bookings and room assignments for approximately 700 participants. Room-sharing preferences and partnered participants are exported from the registration system and must be honoured where possible.

As discussed in Section 4, hotel inventory is one of the first things the host locks, together with the competition and ceremony venues, in the 24–12 month window before the IOI. The Accommodation Coordinator is therefore identified and active from the start of that window, with preliminary hotel contracts (or written options) in place long before the rest of the operational team is recruited.

Key responsibilities fall into three strands. The first is commercial: negotiating and managing the hotel contracts. The second is allocation: assigning rooms per delegation, keeping each delegation together and honouring partnered-participant data from registration. The third is on-site: acting as the single point of contact with hotel management during the IOI week, and coordinating check-in and check-out logistics with the Arrivals and Departure Coordinators.

When assigning rooms, contestants of opposite gender must not share a room. Similarly, leaders of opposite gender are not asked to share rooms, though they may explicitly request a shared arrangement. These rooming conventions follow host-country law and the norms of the participating delegations, and are therefore stated in binary terms; facility planning elsewhere in this document (for example the contest-hall toilet plan in Section 8.1) is instead written to accommodate every participating gender.

Every participant must have their own bed. Double, triple, and quadruple rooms are all acceptable and have been used at previous IOIs, but shared beds are definitely not recommended: each occupant should sleep in a single bed of their own. This needs to be checked explicitly when contracts are signed, because many hotels default to double beds in double rooms.

Hotel geography should be planned separately for contestants and leaders. Contestants should all be in one place: a single hotel, or at most a tight cluster within walking distance, so that the guide corps, medical cover, and daily briefings can be run as one operation and the quarantine separation from leaders is easy to maintain. Leaders tolerate more leeway and can be split across a small number of hotels if the contestant inventory requires it, but even here the spread must be modest; leaders travel to the same GA room, translation nights, and ceremonies as everyone else, and hotels scattered across a city multiply the transport load and fray communications.

If the chosen hotels or hostels do not provide towels or other standard amenities, delegations must be informed at least six weeks before the IOI.

If sponsors are organising activities or placing materials at the hotels (sponsor booths in hotel lobbies, or sponsor-hosted evening events), the Accommodation Coordinator must ensure the Branding Coordinator is informed and that proper coordination is in place to receive, store, and distribute sponsor goods and materials. The hotel must be briefed in advance about any sponsor deliveries or setup activities.

*Key milestones:*

- 24 months out: Hotel inventory secured (preliminary contracts or written options), together with the venues.

- 12 months out: Hotel contracts finalised and signed, in time to announce the host, location, and venue at the previous IOI.
- 2 months out: Room allocation plan drafted.
- 1 week out: Room assignments finalised from registration data.

## 15. After the Event

The host's work does not end on Day 8. This section covers the three post-event tracks that matter for the IOI community: debrief and handover, sponsor reporting, and archive. The HOC Chair should ensure each has a named owner before the week begins. Host-country financial and legal close-out sits alongside these and is owned by the operational budget owner identified in Section 5; it is a host-internal concern and is not covered further here.

**Debrief and handover.** Within two weeks of the IOI, while memory is fresh, the core team should hold a structured debrief capturing what worked and what did not. The resulting notes, together with running orders, supplier contacts, templates (registration exports, guide briefings, signage design files), and the material produced in preparation for this edition, form the handover to the next host. A single handover meeting, accompanied by a shared repository, is far more valuable than a pile of files without context. The formal handover to the IC takes place at the Winter Meeting, the next IC meeting after the IOI, where the outgoing host is expected to deliver a written report accompanied by an oral presentation on the lessons learned from the past IOI.

**Sponsor reporting.** Each sponsor contract specifies deliverables: logo visibility, social media reach, photographic rights, attendance at ceremonies. The Branding Coordinator and the Press & Media Lead assemble the evidence (photos of banners in place, social media analytics, press coverage, delivered goods) and report back within a few weeks of the event. Long-term IOI-wide sponsors are reported to via the IOI Treasurer; the host reports directly to its own host-specific sponsors. Keeping sponsors happy after the event is what makes them willing to support the next one.

**Archive.** Photos, video, printed materials, templates, the risk register, and the debrief notes should be archived at a stable location that survives the end of the host's organisational structure. A foundation, university, or national informatics body is usually the natural home. The archive should be indexed well enough that the next host can find a specific document, not only confirm that it exists somewhere.

## 16. Concluding Remarks

This document runs to more than twenty coordinator roles. The ideas behind them run through the whole text already: keep a backup for every key person, give each task one clear owner, make neighbouring teams talk to each other. I will not line them up again here. What I want to do in this last chapter is different. I want to set down the things the rest of the document deliberately leaves out, and the things I have learned only by watching IOIs from the inside.

**What is not covered:** I left out three areas on purpose, because they sit next to the operational plan rather than inside it.

One is the internal work of the HSC and HTC: how tasks are chosen and prepared, how graders are built, how the contest infrastructure is designed and tested. The IOI Regulations (IOI, 2021) cover that. Another is the long-term sponsor relationships that carry from one edition to the next; those are the IOI Treasurer's job, and I mention them here only where they touch an operational role. The last is the political and diplomatic layer (visa facilitation, government-level funding, host-country fundraising), which sits with the Host Steering Committee and the host's own sponsorship people.

**What everybody underestimates:** The IOI moves to a new country almost every year, and few countries host it twice, so nearly every host is doing this for the first time. I have watched many editions from the inside, and the same few things catch hosts out almost every time. The first is arrivals day, which is always longer and messier than anyone plans for. Every year a few teams turn up incomplete: an overbooked flight or a missed connection leaves a contestant or a leader stranded mid-journey, and someone on the arrivals team has to chase down where they are and when they will land. The second is catering: people eat more, and differently, than you expect. Not every meat eater likes every kind of meat, so they go looking for the vegetarian dishes instead, and the careful counts you prepared stop matching what actually ends up on people's plates. None of this is hard in itself. It is hard because you cannot see it coming from outside; it only becomes real once the event is running.

**What should be shared between hosts:** Every host builds the same things again from nothing: guide briefings, signage, bus schedules, room-allocation spreadsheets. Every host also delivers a debrief afterwards, but in practice it is taken in only by the next host and then goes no further. That knowledge should outlast a single handover, and that is what this document is for.

No two IOIs are alike, so do not copy the org chart in this document.

Drop roles, merge them, rename them, split them across more or fewer people: you have to do what makes sense given your venues, budget, team and other constraints. The one part I would keep is the check underneath it: go through every responsibility named here and make sure a real person has said yes to owning it, and make sure your coordinators understand enough of the rest of the event to catch the problems that fall between roles.

### *Acknowledgements*

I need to thank the many members of the IOI community who proofread drafts of this article and whose suggestions shaped it into its current form. More than that, I want to thank them for the many wonderful evenings we have spent together over the years, talking about the IOI, sometimes late into the night. A great deal of this document began in those conversations.

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## A Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full form
A/V	Audio/Visual
CMS	Contest Management System
DSA	Distinguished Service Award
EGOI	European Girls' Olympiad in Informatics
GA	General Assembly
HOC	Host Organising Committee
HSC	Host Scientific Committee
HTC	Host Technical Committee
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
IC	International Committee (of the IOI)
IOI	International Olympiad in Informatics
ISC	International Scientific Committee
ITC	International Technical Committee

**About the Author**

Eljakim Schrijvers, though most people just call him Kim (the “elja” is silent, apparently), is deeply involved in the IOI community. He has been part of every EGOI since its start in 2021 and was the organiser of EGOI 2024 in the Netherlands.

He also contributes behind the scenes, having served for many years as Treasurer of the IOI. On the technical side, he runs contest systems for multiple Bebras and Kangourou Sans Frontières (KSF) countries, and has built the registration database used by many contests.

Kim also runs a YouTube channel where he explains algorithms in short, accessible videos, sometimes with more enthusiasm (and content) than production quality.

When he’s not working on his company, organising contests, or talking about algorithms, he can occasionally be found on a golf course, though not very successfully, by his own admission. He insists he enjoys it anyway.