



AeroCup 2026 Handbook

V1.1

28th of April 2026

Changelog

Version	Changes
1.0	First release.
1.1	Adjusted Registration Fees.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

AeroCup Portugal is a yearly competition aimed at university students, organized by alumni that have participated in similar competitions. It was inspired by the North American DBF (design-build-fly) and the Air Cargo Challenge, a Portuguese initiative from 2003 that has since gained European projection and is held every two years in a different European city with varying organizations.

The AeroCup Portugal organization aims to provide a stable and reliable competition for university teams to improve every year and put their skills to the test. By using broad rules focused on safety and keeping rule changes to a minimum in-between editions, the competition gives teams the ideal conditions for improving in their previous models without the need to completely redesign the aircraft.

The competition aims to promote technological developments and hands-on learning by challenging students to design, build, and fly unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). On top of the technical demands, the students must develop essential skills in project management and resource allocation, essential for the success of the team. In turn, the AeroCup team will provide a competition where teams may put their aircraft to the test, with: scrutineering to evaluate that the aircraft adheres to the competition's technical and safety requirements; design evaluation with static events and; flight evaluation during dynamic events.

By combining theoretical knowledge with practical execution, AeroCup offers university teams the opportunity to test their skills in a dynamic environment, preparing them for real-world challenges in the fields of aeronautics and engineering.

Chapter 2

General Information

2.1 Competition Objective

The objective of the AeroCup is for a team of university students to design, build and fly small unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), scoring the maximum number of points.

2.2 Competition Classes

A team can enrol in the following classes:

- **Design Class (DC):** The team takes part only in the static events. No aircraft shall be built.
- **Manual Class (MC):** The team takes part in the MC Static Events and in the MC Dynamic Events. All flights are performed with a pilot controlling the aircraft.
- **Automatic Class (AC):** The team takes part in the AC Static Events and in the AC Dynamic Events. Part of the dynamic events are performed without a pilot controlling the aircraft.

Teams that enrol in the Design Class cannot do so in the Manual or Automatic Classes. However, a team can enrol for both Manual and Automatic classes. A team can only participate with an aircraft that has not yet been used in previous editions of the competition, in the same class.

2.3 Competition Information

- The official languages of the competition are Portuguese and English;
- The organizer of any competition outlined in this document is solely responsible for all aspects of the event.

2.4 General Requirements for Teams and Participants

2.4.1 Teams Requirements

- A university or other institution may register one or more teams across one or more classes;
- Teams may be formed with members from two or more institutions;
- For the purpose of registering and competing, each team is considered to be separate and independent;
- Each team must have one team member identified as the team leader. The team leader is the main contact person for the officials during the registration process and the competition.

2.4.2 Participants Requirements

- Team members may be enrolled in only one team;
- Individuals who have previously attended any official event as a judge are not allowed to participate as team members;
- Team members must be enrolled as degree-seeking undergraduate or graduate students in any university. Team members who have graduated within the seven month period before the competition remain eligible to participate;
- Students enrolled in a PhD degree or equivalent are eligible to participate;
- Team members must be at least 18 (eighteen) years of age.

2.4.3 Team and Aircraft Eligibility

- Aircraft entered into the competition must be conceived, designed and maintained by the student team members without direct involvement from external professional engineers, racers, machinists or related professionals;
- The student team may use any information from professionals or from academics as long as the information is given as a discussion of alternatives with their pros and cons;
- Professionals must not make design decisions or drawings;
- Students should perform fabrication tasks whenever possible.

2.5 Documentation and Deadlines

- Before the competition, submitted documents may only be viewed by members of the submitting team, authorized judges, officials, and competent authorities;

- By submitting documents, the team agrees that they may be reproduced and distributed by the officials, in both complete and edited versions, for educational purposes;
- Documents which are considered by the officials as largely incomplete or not readable/viewable will be considered as not submitted.

Chapter 3

Registration

3.1 Enrolment Period

The registration period for the competition starts on 23/03/2026 (Sixteenth of March, 2026) at 00:00 and ends on the 30/04/2026 (Thirtieth of April, 2026) at 23:59. The Registrations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis up to a maximum of 20 teams.

3.2 Fees

There are two types of registration, regardless of the category:

- Team registration: required for the team aircraft (or design) to be able to take part in the technical inspections, static and dynamics events.
- Team member registration: required for each participant to get access to the venue, camping and access other competition services.

3.2.1 Team Registration Fees

The registration of a team includes participation in the competition, lectures and a final award ceremony. For teams competing in the Manual and/or Automatic Classes, a working space for the team to store and work on the aircraft is also provided.

- Design Class: **300 euros (three hundred euros)** for each aircraft design;
- Manual/Automatic Class: **500 euros (five hundred euros)** for the first aircraft and **300 euros (three hundred euros)** for each additional aircraft

3.2.2 Team Member Registration Fees

The registration of a team member gives access to the competition venue and associated services. There are few, independent and cumulative packages that a team member can request.

- Participant package: **25 euros (twenty five euros)**. Includes participation in the competition.
- Camping package: **35 euros (thirty five euros)**. Includes the stay at a camping facility from the 10th until the 13th of July.
- Extra camping night: **15 euros (fifteen euros) per additional night per person.**

All members must pay the registration fees. In case of cancellation, the organizing committee will try to refund as much money as possible. Payment will be made in the form of a single bank transfer per team to an account too be announced prior the competition.

Chapter 4

Event

4.1 Location and Dates

The competition will be held in Regimento de Infantaria N.º 10 (RI10) (Av. Marginal, 3810-901 Aveiro, Portugal) in July 10-13.

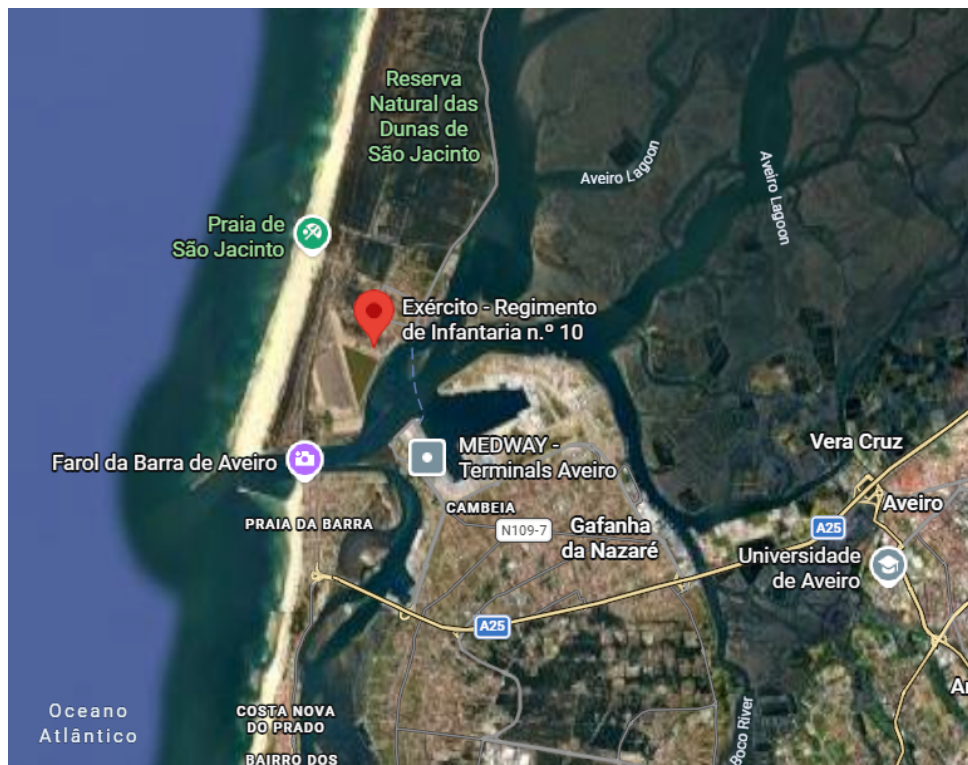


Figure 4.1: Location of the venue. Source: Google Maps.

4.2 Schedule

A general schedule for the competition days is described in Table 4.1.

	Friday, July 10 <i>Day 1</i>	Saturday, July 11 <i>Day 2</i>		Sunday, July 12 <i>Day 3</i>	Monday, July 13 <i>Day 4</i>
Morning	Arrival	Technical Inspections	Static Events	Sponsor Talks	Air Drop Event
	Welcome Ceremony				
Afternoon	Technical Inspections	Test Flights	Static Events	Take Off Event and Flight Performance Event	Flight Demonstrations
					Closing Ceremony

Table 4.1: Event Schedule Structure — July 10–13

This schedule will be updated with more detail in the next version of the handbook in a date to announce.