



WORLD
AQUATICS

TECHNICAL OFFICIALS PATHWAY & APPOINTMENTS RULES

SWIMMING

In force as from 15 September 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER A – BACKGROUND.....	3
CHAPTER B – TECHNICAL OFFICIALS	4
CHAPTER C – TECHNICAL OFFICIALS' EXPENSES.....	5
CHAPTER D – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	6
REFEREES AND OFFICIALS COMMITTEE (ROC)	6
TECHNICAL SPORTS COMMITTEE.....	6
WORLD AQUATICS MANAGEMENT	6
CHAPTER E – FRAMEWORK.....	7
BRONZE LEVEL.....	7
SILVER LEVEL	9
GOLD LEVEL.....	10
CHAPTER F – OFFICIALS TRANSITIONING.....	12
CHAPTER G – WORLD AQUATICS COMPETITIONS.....	13
CHAPTER H – APPOINTMENT POLICY.....	14

CHAPTER A – BACKGROUND

According to the Rights and Duties of the Bureau under the World Aquatics Constitution (Article 17.1, p), the World Aquatics Bureau has established the World Aquatics Referees and Officials Committee ('ROC') for each World Aquatics sport on 17 October 2023 in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The establishment of such Committees should further enhance the integrity of each sport and ensure an efficient and reliable Officiating Programme in Aquatic sports.

Each World Aquatics sport has its own Referees and Officials Committee (except for High Diving, which is to be established at a later stage). Each Committee is represented by three (3) members of which one is the Committee Chair. All members shall be independent from the Sport Technical Committee of each sport and cleared of any conflict of interest.

The new World Aquatics International Technical Officials System is a comprehensive framework designed to enhance the competency and professionalism of Technical Officials in aquatic sports. Built around three core components—education, experience, and evaluation—this system ensures a holistic approach to skill development and performance assessment. It introduces a tiered structure with Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels, each representing a progressive standard of competency. These levels serve as benchmarks to assess and validate the capabilities of technical officials, enabling precise and merit-based appointments to World Aquatics events. This modernized system aims to foster excellence, consistency, and transparency, elevating the standards of officiating across all six aquatic sports.

CHAPTER B – TECHNICAL OFFICIALS

International Technical Officials (ITOs) must be in the World Aquatics ITOs System, approved by the respective Technical Sport Committee for the Aquatic sport in order to officiate at Olympic Games, World Aquatics Championships or World Aquatics Competitions. Nominated officials must be members of the nominating Federation and certified by the Member Federation in submitting their nomination (World Aquatics Competition Regulations, Part One, Article 10.1)

As per the rules, the maximum age of Technical Officials when officiating at World Aquatics Championships or World Aquatics Competitions, except Masters, High Diving and Water Polo, shall be sixty-five (65) years when application is made for the respective World Aquatics List.

World Aquatics differentiate different roles conducted at the World Aquatics events that fall under Technical Officials.

Roles (Competition Regulations Part Two, 2. Technical Officials)

- Referees*
- Starters*
- Judges of Stroke
- Chief Inspectors of Turns
- Inspector of Turns
- Reserve Inspectors of Turns
- Control Room Supervisor
- Video Review Supervisor*
- Video Review Judge
- Call Room Supervisor
- Call Room Judges
- Resolution Desk Judge
- Warm-up supervisors

*Unique roles that require specific requirements and qualifications

CHAPTER C – TECHNICAL OFFICIALS' EXPENSES

There are several financial aspects to be considered for Officials' education, certification and appointments.

All Official's Education and Certification opportunities costs (courses associated fees, course expenses such as travel, accommodation, transportation, meals) sit with the Technical Official candidate and/or his/her National Federation.

Once appointed for the World Aquatics Event (Tier 1 and Tier 2) the expenses are covered as per the following for all International Technical Officials*.

Expense type	Tier 1		Tier 2	
	Olympic Games	World Aquatics Championships/ World Aquatics Swimming Championships (25m)	World Aquatics Junior Swimming Championships	World Aquatics World Cup
Travel (economy airfare, train fare, bus fare, by car)	Organising Committee	National Federation	National Federation	National Federation
Visa (and visa fee associated costs)	Organising Committee	National Federation	National Federation	National Federation
Accommodation (minimum European three stars hotel)	Organising Committee	Organising Committee	Organising Committee	National Federation
Ground Transportation	Organising Committee	Organising Committee	Organising Committee	Organising Committee
Meals (full board)	Organising Committee	Organising Committee	Organising Committee	National Federation
Per Diem (as per World Aquatics Per Diem policy**)	Organising Committee	World Aquatics	World Aquatics	National Federation
Health Insurance	Organising Committee	World Aquatics	World Aquatics	World Aquatics
Uniforms ***	Organising Committee	Organising Committee	Organising Committee	Organising Committee

* Unless it is differently stipulated in the Hosting Agreement between World Aquatics and the Organising Committee

** May differ for the Olympic Games

*** Unless differently stipulated by World Aquatics

For National Technical Officials all expenses shall be covered by the Organising Committee or National Federation.

CHAPTER D – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

REFEREES AND OFFICIALS COMMITTEE (ROC)

The Referees and Officials Committee's responsibilities, per Sport, shall be as follows:

- to propose rosters of Officials -if required-, subject to the approval of the Bureau for all World Aquatics Events based on the lists of eligible Officials as well as the minimum required number and level-qualified Officials per event Tier;
- according to the feedback and evaluations from the relevant Technical Sports Committee -if required- to appoint the necessary Officials on a daily basis or to amend appointments during competitions; and
- to provide any other professional activity as deemed necessary by World Aquatics.

Referees and Officials Committee shall work in synergy with each Technical Sport Committee, World Aquatics Sports and Development departments.

TECHNICAL SPORTS COMMITTEE

Throughout the technical aspects of the sport, one of the roles of each Technical Sport Committee is to advise the World Aquatics regarding Officials' Education. In addition to this, the Technical Sports Committee shall work closely with the Referees and Officials Committee (ROC) and the World Aquatics Sports Management team, ensuring an efficient and successful officiating system at all World Aquatics Events.

WORLD AQUATICS MANAGEMENT

World Aquatics Management must work closely with the Technical Sports Committees and Referees and Officials Committees while ensuring that the Officials System and database remain up to date. In addition, it must maintain collaborative communication regarding the appointments with the National Federations and Organizing Committees.

World Aquatics shall oversee the work of the Referees and Officials Committee.

To enable a smooth and efficient working approach World Aquatics Management has introduced a new Officials' Programme (more information is provided in Chapter E).

CHAPTER E – FRAMEWORK

World Aquatics has put in place a new Officials' Programme that identifies all International Technical Officials within three different Officials' levels and enables the Referees and Officials Committee to achieve their duty as an appointment body. The system is defined by three Officials' levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold.

Besides, World Aquatics reserves the right to promote or demote officials upon recommendation from the Technical Committee.

The pathway to becoming a World Aquatics International Technical Official is outlined below.

References to the tier of competitions are based on the Competition Regulations, Part One, 2 International Competitions and World Aquatics Calendar.

International Competitions are divided into the following tiers:

Tier 1. Major Aquatics Competitions - the Olympic Games, World Aquatics Championships, World Aquatics Swimming Championships (25m);

Tier 2. Other World Aquatics Competitions - World Junior and Youth Championships in each sport, World Cups, World Leagues, and other World Aquatics competitions;

Tier 3. Continental and Regional Competitions - Continental or Regional Multi-Sport Games, Competitions organised by Continental or Regional Organisations;

Tier 4. Member Federation International Competitions - Events organised or sanctioned by a Member Federation in which other World Aquatics Member Federations, clubs or individuals participate;

Tier 5. Other competitions of major international importance as defined by World Aquatics.

BRONZE LEVEL

PATHWAY TO ENTER BRONZE LEVEL

2 Cycles of a period of 2 years (4 years in total)

CANDIDATES' PROFILE

Officials :

- with good knowledge of the rules
- with ethical, physical and mental readiness
- with experience in officiating at **Tier 5** competitions
- who meet the relevant policies of their responsible Member Federation

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA TO ENTER BRONZE LEVEL

National Federations can nominate up to eleven (11) Officials (validation is made by World Aquatics), comprising a maximum of seven (7) Referees and four (4) Starters

Host National Federations of Tier 1 and Tier 2 competitions may be permitted to nominate additional Officials for the specified period to ensure the minimum required number of Technical Officials for the competition, as outlined in Chapter G.

1) Age: Min **18**, Max **65**

2) Proof of experience: minimum 2 Tier 5 competitions within four years before the application for the Bronze Level.

3) English language certificate (intermediate level B1/B2)

4) Application submitted by the National Federation for the candidate to take the Bronze level e-learning course.

5) Completed the Bronze level e-learning course within one year on the World Aquatics Learning Platform, concluded by a successful online assessment.

REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN BRONZE LEVEL

EDUCATION

- Biennial Online Exam: Open for one month on the World Aquatics Learning Platform. Must be completed in a single attempt with Bronze passing grade.
- Online sessions: Participate in online sessions on Rules changes and other specific topics.

EXPERIENCE

- Within a period of **two (2)** years

Officiated at:

- Competitions of which Tier(s): **Tier 3** or below
- How many competitions: at least **three (3)**
- At least one (1) officiating experience at **competitions where evaluations are conducted** in four (4) years

Consequential outcome 1	Consequential outcome 2	
The official does not meet the requirements of the Bronze level	The official meets all requirements of the Bronze level	
- The official loses his/her Bronze level status - In order to re-enter Bronze level, they need to meet the eligibility criteria of Bronze level.	The official obtains the right to apply for the Silver level after two cycles	The official intends to remain in Bronze after two cycles Limit of age to remain in Bronze: 65 at the year of renewal

SILVER LEVEL

PATHWAY TO ENTER SILVER LEVEL

Over 4 years

CANDIDATES' PROFILE

Officials:

- with very good knowledge of the rules
- with significant level of experience in officiating at **Tier 3,4,5** competitions
- continental and gender representation

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA TO ENTER SILVER LEVEL

National Federations can nominate up to six (6) number of Officials (validation is made by World Aquatics), comprising a maximum of four (4) Referees and two (2) Starters

Host National Federations of Tier 1 and Tier 2 competitions may be permitted to nominate additional Officials for the specified period to ensure the minimum required number of Technical Officials for the competition, as outlined in Chapter G.

- Age: Min 18, Max 65
- Successfully completed 4 years in Bronze (education and experience)
- Officiated at least one (1) officiating experience at **Tier 3** in four (4) years
- Completed the Silver level in-person course, including classroom and practical sessions at a competition, concluded by a successful assessment and practical evaluation.

REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN SILVER LEVEL

EDUCATION

- Biennial Online Exam: Open for one month on the World Aquatics Learning Platform. Must be completed in a single attempt with Silver passing grade.
- Online sessions: Participate in online sessions on Rules changes or other specific topics.
- Mentorship opportunities will be available for further development.

EXPERIENCE

- Within a period of **4 years**

Officiate at:

- Competitions of which Tier(s): **Tier 2** and below
- How many competitions: **Ten (10)**
 - One (1) time at Tier 2
 - One (1) time at Tier 3
 - Eight (8) times at Tier 4/5

PRACTICAL EVALUATION		
- At competitions of which Tier(s): Tier 2 and below - Six (6) evaluations required within a period of four (4) years - Min score: QUALITATIVE evaluation - Evaluated by: • Tier 1, 2, 3: TSC Commission or approved by TSC Commission • Tier 4, 5: TSC approved evaluator (NF recommended) Note: Evaluator(s) to be appointed only at the World Aquatics qualifying events.		
Consequential outcome 1	Consequential outcome 2	
The official does not meet the requirements of the Silver level	The official meets all requirements of the Silver Level	
- The official loses his/her Silver level status - In order to re-enter Silver level, they must complete a two-year cycle at the Bronze level and meet the eligibility criteria of Silver level.	The official obtains the right to apply for the Gold level	The official intends to remain in Silver level. Limit of age to remain in Silver: 65 at the year of renewal

GOLD LEVEL

PATHWAY TO ENTER GOLD LEVEL

Over 4 years

CANDIDATES' PROFILE

Officials:

- with exceptional knowledge of the rules and competition management
- with strong experience in officiating at **Tier 1 and 2** competitions (AQUA events)
- continental and gender representation

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA TO ENTER GOLD LEVEL

National Federations can nominate up to four (4) Officials (validation is made by World Aquatics), comprising a maximum of three (3) Referees and one (1) Starter

- Age: Min 18, Max 65
- Successfully completed 4 years in Silver (education, experience and evaluation)
- Officiated at least one (1) officiating experience at **Tier 2** in four (4) years
- Completed the Gold level course (webinar or in-person course), concluded by a successful assessment.

REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN GOLD LEVEL

EDUCATION

- Biennial Online Exam: Open for one month on the World Aquatics Learning Platform. Must be completed in a single attempt with Gold passing grade.
- Online sessions: Participate in online sessions on Rules changes or other specific topics.
- Knowledge sharing: Gold Officials to mentor and share their expertise with Silver Officials.

EXPERIENCE

- Within a period of **4** years

Officiate at:

- Competitions of which Tier(s): **Tier 1** and below
- How many competition(s): **Seven (7)**
 - One (1) time at Tier 1
 - One (1) time at Tier 2
 - One (1) time at Tier 3
 - Four (4) times at Tier 4/5

EVALUATION

- Within a period of **4** years
 - Two (2) evaluations required within a period of **four (4)** years
 - At competitions of which Tier(s): Tier 1 and below
 - Min score: QUALITATIVE evaluation
 - Evaluated by:
 - Tier 1, 2, 3: TSC Commission or approved by TSC Commission
 - Tier 4, 5: TSC approved evaluator (NF recommended)
- Note: Evaluator(s) to be appointed only at the World Aquatics qualifying events.

Consequential outcome 1	Consequential outcome 2
The official does not meet the requirements of the Gold level	The official meets all requirements of the Gold level
- The official loses his/her Gold level - In order to re-enter the Gold level, they must complete a cycle at the Silver level and meet the eligibility criteria of the Gold level.	They intend to remain in Gold Limit of age to maintain Gold: 65 at the year of renewal

CHAPTER F – OFFICIALS TRANSITIONING

To ensure smooth transition and consistency in officiating, World Aquatics will determine the transitioning process for the existing pool of International Technical Officials, based on several criteria, using the Bronze, Silver, and Gold system.

The criteria will include current Officials' **education** and **certification, evaluation, and experience** officiating at events organised or approved by World Aquatics.

All officials retained the Bronze level status until their initial evaluations are conducted at events organised or approved by World Aquatics through 2026.

Officials nominated for 2027, for whom the application process will open in Q3 2026, must meet the eligibility criteria for the respective level. All officials applying for renewal must complete the online examination and achieve the required passing score by the nomination deadline. The online examination will be available from October 2026.

Promotions to the Silver and Gold levels may be granted based on officials' performance evaluations conducted by World Aquatics at selected Tier 3 and higher competitions during 2026, subject to review and approval by the Technical Swimming Committee. Each National Federation with an official promoted to the Silver or Gold level will be permitted to fill any available Bronze-level quota places once the promotions have been completed.

An additional round of promotions will take place in Q4 2027, taking into account the evaluations conducted during 2027.

CHAPTER G – WORLD AQUATICS COMPETITIONS

World Aquatics defines five (5) different Tiers of International Competitions as per World Aquatics Competition Regulations, Part One, Article 2.1. For the World Aquatics Officials Appointments, the Competitions of relevance are:

Tier 1. Major Aquatics Competitions - the Olympic Games, World Aquatics Championships, World Aquatics Swimming Championships (25m), and

Tier 2. Other World Aquatics Competitions - World Junior and Youth Championships in each sport, World Cups, World Leagues, and other World Aquatics competitions.

The following tables outline the number of events per Tier (per single calendar year and one Olympic cycle) and the minimum number and optimum ratio of Technical Officials at the respective events:

Number of Events per Tier

SPORT	Tier 1		Tier 2		Total	
	Per Calendar Year	Per Olympic Cycle	Per Calendar Year	Per Olympic Cycle	Per Calendar Year	Per Olympic Cycle
SWIMMING	1	5	3-4	12-16	4-5	17-21

Minimum Number of Technical Officials for Each Sports Event

Swimming	Event	# ITOs	# NTOs
Tier 1	Olympic Games	22	11
	World Championships	27	10
	World Championships (25m)	27	8
Tier 2	World Cup	10+	30+
	World Junior Championships	27	8

Optimum Ratio of Technical Officials for Each Sports Event

Swimming							
Tier	% Bronze	# Bronze	% Silver	# Silver	% Gold	# Gold	% total
Tier 1 - OG			20		80		100
Tier 1 - WCH			40		60		100
Tier 2 - WJSCH	20		30		50		100
Tier 2 - SWC	40		50		10		100

CHAPTER H – APPOINTMENT POLICY

World Aquatics Referees and Officials Committee shall be the only body that has the mandate to recommend and appoint International Officials for all World Aquatics Events, subject to World Aquatics Bureau approval.

The Referees and Officials Committee in consultation with the relevant Technical Sports Committee should proceed to Officials appointments (referees, judges, starters, technical controllers, etc.) for all World Aquatics Events as soon as the World Aquatics Event Calendar is released. In principle, the appointments should take place no later than six (6) months before the commencement of the sports event.

The following shall be taken into consideration when making the Officials appointments:

- Tier level of the event;
- Required percentage for appointment of Bronze, Silver, and Gold level Officials;
- Officials' education, certification, evaluation and experience;
- Continental/Regional representation;
- Gender representation;
- Officials' development opportunities;
- Available support through National Programmes;
- Perceived or actual conflict of interest.

Once the appointments are made, and upheld by the World Aquatics Bureau, the World Aquatics Management Team shall communicate appointments to the relevant Officials, National Federations and Organising committees.

Until all certified officials are categorised under the new pathway in accordance with the transition process outlined in Chapter F, the Referee and Officials Committee will nominate officials for approval by the World Aquatics Bureau. These nominations will be based on the existing references of certified officials and will be made in consultation with the Technical Swimming Committee.