

Officials Update - Certificate of Exception

Formerly the 'Certificate of Swimming Disability'.

1.0 Purpose of Certificate of Swimming Disability

As per the 2020/21 Swim England handbook the certificate existed to recognise that a number of swimmers have impairments that prevent them from competing against non-disabled competitors on terms as equal as possible.

The purpose of the certificate was therefore to ensure that disabled competitors do not get disqualified for performing a stroke incorrectly due to their disability and who:

- Have **not yet** been classified;
- Do not wish to undergo classification;
- Do not fit the Physical Classification System.

There is no requirement for any swimmer that already has a World Para Swimming exception to have a Certificate.

2.0 The Update

The update consists of two fundamental changes:

- An expansion of the Certificate from technical exceptions solely related to disability to also include swimwear exceptions that account for considerations such as religion and gender.
- A removal of the need to provide medical evidence of disability. This is replaced with a co-signatory from the applicant's club confirming the information provided is, to the best of their knowledge, accurate.

3.0 The Process

- As with the current process the applicant is required to complete an application form (Appendix 1) and submit it to the Swim England Membership team.
- The updated form consists of a straightforward set of questions including a section for the applicant to detail exactly how their impairment may impact their adherence to competition regulations.
This information is passed onto an assigned Technical Official with extensive knowledge of disability/para swimming who then identifies which regulations are impacted and provides the relevant exception needed to enable the applicant to compete fairly.
- Alternatively, if applying for a swimwear exception the applicant would simply detail this request with a brief rationale as to why.
- Once the Swim England Membership team have been informed, they send a laminated certificate to the applicant to be presented to the Referee at each competition. The certificate is valid for all **domestic** competition for a period of 2 years.

At the point of renewal, the individual is either able to confirm their exception remains the same, thus maintaining the same exceptions or apply for amended exceptions if there have been significant changes.

4.0 Your Responsibilities

As a new process we recognise there may be reservations as to how Officials are expected to implement the Certificate within competition.

We would like to reassure all Officials that the process remains unchanged from that used for the Certificate of Swimming Disability.

For clarity this follows several simple steps:

- Swimmer is awarded Certificate of Exception prior to competition and is provided with physical, laminated copy of certificate. Only awarded exceptions will be visible on the certificate.
- The swimmer presents the certificate to the Race Referee as soon as they arrive on venue and always in advance of their first competition.
- If a technical infraction is reported to the Race Referee that is covered by the awarding exception, then the infraction is to be permitted.
- If a technical infraction is reported for which the swimmer does not have an exception, they will be subject to the relevant penalty within the competition rules and regulations.
- In the event of a swimwear exception the Race Referee should ensure this is shared with the Clerk of the Course to ensure they are not challenged.

Please note, the content of the certificate of exception is not to be challenged or assessed by an official under any circumstances. In the event concerns need to be raised, the Race Referee should contact equality@swimming.org

Overall, the update of the Certificate is intended to make the process easier for the applicant and clearer for our officials. We want to ensure our competitions are accessible and enjoyable for all.

If you have any questions, please contact equality@swimming.org

Appendix 1 – Application Form

Certificate of Exception Application Form

Section 1 – Personal Details

| | | | |
|---|--|-----------|--|
| Surname: | | Forename: | |
| Address: | | | |
| | | | |
| | | Postcode: | |
| Preferred Telephone Number: | | | |
| Gender: Male/Female/ Prefer to Self-Describe: | | | |

As 'gender-affected sports' aquatics are split into 'male' and 'female' eligibility categories. For the purposes of competition please select the category in which you compete.

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Competition Category: | Male/Female |
|-----------------------|-------------|

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Email: | |
| Date of Birth: | |
| Swim England Membership Number: | |

Exception Required:

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Swimwear (Section 2) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Technical (Section 3) |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|

Section 2 – Swimwear Exception

Please note the exception afforded by this certificate refers to FINA GR 5.1-3 Swimwear BL8.2-8. 'Performance-enhancing' swimwear or those that increase buoyancy will not be permitted under this exception.

Please detail the reasons why you require a swimwear exception (e.g. religious requirements, adaption to suit to accommodate disability etc.).

Additionally, if requesting an exception for taping to cover a medical device please include within this section details of the device. (Please delete explanatory text when completing).

Section 3 – Technical Exception

Nature of Disability or Long-Term Health Conditions:

Please tell us how your impairment affects you (e.g. lower left leg weakness and reduced range of motion etc.).

Which swimming strokes are affected and how?

(Please provide as much detail as possible with regards to any movements you cannot do as our Technical Official will use this to determine the exception(s) needed for your certificate. The exceptions that the certificate will be awarded against are detailed within Section 5.)

Section 4 – Confirmation

If the applicant is under 18 years of age the following will need to be completed by a parent/guardian.

I confirm that the information provided above is accurate and honestly reflects the exceptions required.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Signatory (PRINT NAME): | |
| Signed: | |
| Date: | |

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information provided above is accurate and honestly reflects the exceptions required.

Please note: The Co-Signatory cannot be related to the applicant.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Co-Signatory (PRINT NAME): | |
| Position within Applicant's Club: | |
| Swim England Club: | |
| Swim England Membership Number: | |
| Signed: | |
| Date: | |

Data Protection Statement:

Swim England will use your personal data for the purpose of producing your certification and I understand that by submitting this form, I am consenting to receiving my Certificate of Exception by post, email, SMS/MMS, online or phone unless stated otherwise. Where applicable, certification will only be given to participants with a permanent disability, not to participants with a short term incapacity.

Please complete and return to Swim England's membership team via:
renewals@swimming.org

Section 5 - Criteria for the Issue of a Technical Exception

Backstroke:

Start: Unable to grip handrail with one (specify which) or both hands
Support/Assistance needed to enter the pool and/or perform a start.

Breaststroke:

Arms: Unable to perform simultaneous arm movement.
Unable to maintain arms in the same horizontal plane.
Unable to perform a 'Breaststroke Type' action with one (specify which) or both arms.

Legs: Unable to perform simultaneous leg movement.
Unable to maintain legs in the same horizontal plane.
Unable to turn Left/Right/Both (specify which) foot/feet outwards.
Unable to perform any leg kick.

Turn/Finish: Unable to perform a simultaneous touch or can touch with one hand only.

Butterfly:

Arms: Unable to perform a simultaneous arm movement.

Legs: Unable to perform a simultaneous up and down leg movement with one (specify which) leg.
Unable to perform any leg kick.

Turn/Finish: Unable to perform a simultaneous touch or can touch with one hand only.

Support/Assistance:

Start: To enter the pool and/or perform a start for events when starting in the water.
To assist stability on the block or poolside when making a start.

Turn/Finish: To perform 'Tapping' operation for visually impaired swimmers.

Stroke: To act as 'Spotter' for swimmers with a specified medical condition.

Appendix 2 – Blank Example Certificate

Certificate of Exception

[INSERT NAME] [INSERT MEMBERSHIP NUMBER]

SWIMWEAR EXCEPTION: YES/NO

TECHNICAL EXCEPTION: YES/NO

| Stroke | Exception | Further detail |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Backstroke | Start –Left/Right/Both | |
| | | |
| Breaststroke | Arm(s) – Left/Right/Both | |
| | Leg(s) – Left/Right/Both | |
| | Turn/Finish | |
| Butterfly | Arm(s) – Left/Right/Both | |
| | Leg(s)-Left/Right/Both | |
| | Turn/Finish | |
| Support/Assistance | Start | |
| | Turn/Finish | |
| | Stroke | |
| Other | Visual Impairment – Yes/No | |
| | Medical Device – Yes/No | |

This certificate is valid for **TWO** years only and the swimmer **MUST** reapply within **TWO YEARS** of the date shown below.

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Date | [date submitted to Swim England] |
| CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY MEMBERSHIP TEAM ON BEHALF OF SWIM ENGLAND | |

PLEASE ENSURE THAT THIS CERTIFICATE IS AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION TO THE REFEREE AT **ALL** COMPETITIONS.

The swimmer should present the certificate to the referee as soon as they arrive on venue and always in advance of their first competition.

Appendix 3 – Completed Example Certificate

Certificate of Exception

MIKE HAWKES 740414

SWIMWEAR EXCEPTION: NO

TECHNICAL EXCEPTION: YES

| Stroke | Exception | Further detail |
|--------------|-------------------------|--|
| Backstroke | Start – Left | Unable to grip handrail with left hand. |
| Breaststroke | Arm(s) – Left | Unable to perform simultaneous arm movement. |
| | Turn/Finish | Unable to perform a simultaneous touch. |
| Butterfly | Arm(s) – Left | Unable to perform a simultaneous arm movement. |
| | Turn/Finish | Unable to perform a simultaneous touch. |
| | Turn/Finish | To perform 'Tapping' operation for visually impaired swimmers. |
| Other | Visual Impairment – Yes | Partially sighted, reduced vision in left eye. |
| | Medical Device – Yes | Flash glucose monitor on left arm. |

This certificate is valid for **TWO** years only and the swimmer **MUST** reapply within **TWO YEARS** of the date shown below.

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Date: | 20 th April 2022 |
| CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY MEMBERSHIP TEAM ON BEHALF OF SWIM ENGLAND | |

PLEASE ENSURE THAT THIS CERTIFICATE IS AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION TO THE REFEREE AT **ALL** COMPETITIONS.

The swimmer should present the certificate to the referee as soon as they arrive on venue and always in advance of their first competition.