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 **Gulf LSC Officials Certification Guidelines**

 *Effective September 1, 2019*

 **Introduction**

Gulf Swimming strives to develop officials who are fair, competent, current in rulebook application and consistent in approach. The training program is designed to produce skilled officials who are capable of providing athletes with the best, most consistent and fairest possible level of observation. This program is aimed at certification\* of N1 officials with emphasis on quality assurance and portability outside of the Gulf Swimming LSC. National (N2 & N3) certification guidelines are posted on the USA Swimming Website.

The following guidelines are for informational purposes only. Certification of LSC officials is the responsibility of the Gulf Swimming Officials Committee Chair who has final authority in specific certification standards. The certification guidelines are effective for a two-year term unless new USA Swimming rules require changes. Changes to the certification guidelines require a majority vote from the Officials Committee. Suggested changes to guidelines can be submitted in writing to the Officials Committee Chair at any time.

All recommendations to certify Gulf officials will be accepted from Gulf LSC Meet Referees only. Evaluations(not apply to OQM) from Meet Referees outside the Gulf Swimming LSC are acceptable for training and educational purposes only.

\*Certification at any position means that the official is fully trained, competent in position, and has met all of the guidelines in this document.

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL–APPRENTICE (AP)**

All new officials must complete the following pre-requisites (item #3-#6 in order please, very important) before commencing on deck apprenticeship at a USA Swimming sanctioned meet.

* Register with USA Swimming through Gulf Swimming as a Non-Athlete Member.
* After you confirm registration and set up/link your USA Swimming account, initiate a Background Check (BGC).
* Sign onto your USA Swimming account and complete the Athlete Protection Training (APT) course.
* Sign in <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html> OR <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/61151/concussion-in-sports> to take Concussion Protocol Training and forward your copy of the certificate to Gulf Administrator -Loren.Fischbach@gulfswimming.org.
* Sign onto your USA Swimming account, take and pass the open book Administrative Officials test on the USA Swimming site with a minimum 80% passing grade. .
* Must attend an Administrative Official Apprentice Clinic.
* Clinic availability will be posted on [Gulf Swimming website](https://www.teamunify.com/team/gslsc/page/home) by Training Committees approved by the Officials’ Chair.

Once the above process is complete you will receive a confirmation email with a link to print your “Administrative Official-AP” card. Please print and take to the meets to confirm your clearance to begin your on-deck apprenticeship.

To continue your Administrative Official Apprenticeship:

* Email in advance (at least 6 weeks) the Meet Referee and the Administrative Official of the meet on the availability to apprentice at the meet.
* Recommend working all session(s) at the meet during this training.

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL–QUALIFIED (Q)**

In order to become fully certified as an Administrative Official the following steps need to be completed after on-deck training has been cleared with the “AP” or Apprentice designation:

* Official attire requirements for regular Gulf Swimming meets: White short sleeves polo shirt with collar must be tucked in (no team logos), navy shorts,long pants or skirts, white socks/white athletic shoes. This might be referred to as white over navy with white athletic shoes.
* Official attire requirements for championship meets attire may change to a special combination (e.g., white over khaki; navy blue over khaki over white socks/ white athletic shoes). Attire is always specified in the meet announcement. The shirts must be tucked in to look professional on deck.
* Successfully apprentice as an AO during at least six( 6) sessions at a meet under the supervision of a certified AO, Administrative Referee or Meet Referee.
* Please note that certification is not automatic after completion of the minimum six (6) sessions. The Administrative Official apprentice must have proven themselves capable of handling the role and providing the best possible meet results and paperwork for the meet.
* Request an evaluation in advance and receive a positive recommendation from the certified AO and/or the Administrative Referee or Meet Referee at the meet, please refer to the Administrative Training log as a guideline to meet all the requirements for recommendation.
* In order to finalize certification as an Administrative Official, the Officials Chair must have received positive recommendations from three (3) Meet Referees within the Gulf Swimming LSC but must be from three (3)separate meets for this level.
* All fully certified (qualified) Administrative Officials will have to take the recertification test for an Administrative official every two (2) years to maintain their certification.
* When the Administrative Official Certification criteria have been met and the LSC Officials Chair has processed the certification, the official will be emailed with a link to the certification card that shows “Administrative Official –Q”. Please allow USA Swimming 7-10 days to process this transaction.

**STROKE AND TURN APPRENTICE OFFICIALS(AP)**

All new officials must complete the following prerequisites(in order) before commencing on deck apprenticeship at a USA swimming sanctioned meet.

1. Register with USA Swimming through Gulf Swimming as a Non-Athlete Member.
2. After you confirm registration and set up/link your USA Swimming account, initiate a Background Check (BGC).
3. Sign onto your USA Swimming account and complete the Athlete Protection Training (APT) course.
4. Sign onto <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html> OR <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/61151/concussion-in-sports> to take Concussion Protocol Training and forward your copy of the certificate to Gulf Administrator -Loren.Fischbach@gulfswimming.org.
5. Sign onto your USA Swimming account, take and pass the open book Stroke and Turn/Timer test on the USA Swimming site with a minimum 80% passing grade.
6. Must attend a Stroke and Turn clinic to be held at various locations at select times throughout the year.
7. Clinic availability will be posted on [Gulf Swimming website](https://www.teamunify.com/team/gslsc/page/home) presented by Training Committees approved by the Officials’ Chair.
8. Official attire requirements for regular Gulf Swimming meets: White short-sleeves polo shirt with collar must be tucked in (no team logos), navy shorts,long pants or skirts, white socks/white athletic shoes. This might be referred to as white over navy with white athletic shoes.
9. Officials attire requirements for championship meets attire may change to a special combination (e.g., white over khaki; navy blue over khaki white socks/white athletic shoes). Attire is always specified in the meet announcement. The shirts must be tucked in to look professional on deck.

Once the above process is complete you will receive a confirmation email from USA Swimming with a link to print your “Stroke and Turn (AP) Apprentice” card.Please allow USA Swimming 7-10 days to process this transaction.

**STROKE AND TURN CERTIFICATION -QUALIFIED(Q)**

 In order to become fully certified as a Stroke & Turn official the following steps need to be completed after on-deck training has been cleared with the “AP” or Apprentice designation:

* Work with a certified official for four (4) sessions at which time no disqualifications should be called by the apprentice during this learning phase. This requirement can be waived by the Meet Referee if the apprentice has previous officiating experience and understands the position or if there are not enough certified officials in attendance to provide one on one training
* Work an additional minimum six (6) sessions on deck as an apprentice S&T official at which time calls can and should be made as observed to assist with the determination of certification readiness.
* Please note that certification is not automatic after completion of the minimum ten (10) sessions.The Stroke and Turn Apprentice must have proven themselves capable of handling the roles and demonstrates the best possible judgement and fairness officiating at the meet.
* The S&T apprentice official can request recommendation for certification from the Meet Referee of the meet after completing the minimum sessions.
* Please make sure that when you do request an evaluation for recommendation, refer to the attached Stroke and Turn Training log as a guideline to meet all the requirements.
* All sessions worked should include events for backstroke, butterfly, breaststroke and an individual medley event plus be a minimum of two (2) hours in length to be considered towards certification.
* In order to finalize certification as a Stroke & Turn Official, the Officials Chair must have received positive recommendations from three (3) Meet Referees within the Gulf Swimming LSC but must be from three (3)separate meets /venues for this level.
* At the discretion of the Gulf Swimming Officials Chair and based on recommendations received from the Meet Referees, the minimum number of sessions can be waived for final certification if the Stroke & Turn Apprentice has previous officiating experience and demonstrates that during sessions worked in the position.
* When the above criteria have been met and the LSC Officials Chair has processed the certification, the apprentice Stroke and Turn Official will be emailed a link from USA Swimming to your certification card that shows “Stroke & Turn–Q”. Please allow USA Swimming 7-10 days to process this transaction.

**CHIEF JUDGE–APPRENTICE (AP)**

The following prerequisites must be met in order to commence apprenticeship on-deck as a Chief Judge:

* Must be currently certified in the Gulf Swimming LSC as a Stroke and Turn Judge.\*
* Must work a minimum of six (6) sessions as certified Stroke and Turn .
* Must attend a Chief Judge Apprentice clinic.
* Clinic availability will be posted on [Gulf Swimming website](https://www.teamunify.com/team/gslsc/page/home) presented by the Training Committee approved by the Officials Chair.

When the above criteria have been met, the apprentice Chief Judge will be emailed by USA Swimming with a link to your certification card that shows “Chief Judge–AP”. Please allow USA Swimming 7-10 days to process this transaction.

**CHIEF JUDGE–QUALIFIED (Q)**

 In order to finalize certification as a Chief Judge in the LSC the apprentice must:

* Read and understand the “Professional Chief Judge” document posted on www.usaswimming.org
* Work a minimum of ten (10) sessions in the position of a Chief Judge.
* Please note that certification is not automatic after completion of the minimum ten (10) sessions. The Chief Judge Apprentice must have proven that you are knowledgeable and capable of fulfilling this position and professional manner.
* The Chief Judge (AP) can request evaluation for a recommendation from the Meet Referee of the meet after completing the minimum sessions.
* Please make sure that when you do request an evaluation for recommendation, refer to the attached Chief Judge Training log as a guideline to meet all the requirements.
* Must request and successfully obtain positive recommendations from three different three (3) Meet Referees but must be from three (3) separate meets for this level, one of whom must be an N3 certified Deck Referee with USA Swimming or approved by the LSC Officials Chair to attend the meet to accommodate this recommendation.
* One of the three (3) recommendations must come from working in the position of a Chief Judge at a Prelims/Finals meet with multiple sessions.
* Once the above criteria have been met, the LSC Officials Chair will review all the recommendations and may require an additional on-deck evaluation prior to certification. If required, you will be notified by email and an evaluation set up accordingly

\*NOTE - The required training activities for Chief Judge certification may be fulfilled at any time after certification as a Stroke and Turn Judge. The Chief Judge certification does not have to be completed prior to training and certification for either Starter or Deck Referee. However, Chief Judge certification is required prior to training as a Meet Referee.

 When the above criteria have been met and the LSC Officials Chair has processed the certification, the apprentice Chief Judge Official will be emailed a link from USA Swimming to your certification card that shows “Chief Judge–Q”. Please allow USA Swimming 7-10 days to process this transaction.

**STARTER–APPRENTICE (AP)**

The following pre-requisites must be met in order to commence apprenticeship on-deck as a Starter:

* Must be currently certified in the Gulf Swimming LSC as a Stroke & Turn Official.
* Must complete the online Starter’s test.
* Must work a minimum of six (6) sessions as certified Stroke and Turn.
* Must attend a Starter clinic to be held at various locations at select times throughout the year.
* Clinic availability will be posted on [Gulf Swimming website](https://www.teamunify.com/team/gslsc/page/home) presented by Training committees approved by the LSC Officials Chair.
* Sign onto your USA Swimming account, take and pass the open book Starter test on the USA Swimming site with a minimum 80% passing grade.

When the above criteria have been met, the Starter (AP) will be emailed by USA Swimming with a link to your certification card that shows “Starter–AP”. Please allow USA Swimming 7-10 days to process this transaction.

**STARTER–QUALIFIED (Q)**

 In order to finalize certification as a Starter in the LSC the apprentice must:

* Work a minimum of ten (10) sessions in the role of an apprentice Starter on deck.
* Of the ten (10) sessions worked, there must be a combination of starting at various levels of meets including 8 & under, Age Group and Senior meets.
* Please note that certification is not automatic after completion of the minimum ten(10) sessions. The Starter Apprentice must have proven themselves capable of handling the role and providing the best possible starts for the swimmers.
* The Starter (AP) can request evaluation for a recommendation from the Meet Referee of the meet after completing the minimum sessions. Please make sure that when you do request an evaluation for recommendation, refer to the attached Starter Training log as a guideline to meet all the requirements.
* Must request and successfully obtain positive recommendations from three different (3) Meet Referees,but must be from three (3) separate meets from this level, one of whom must be an N3 certified Starter with USA Swimming or approved by the LSC Official Chair to attend the meet to accommodate this recommendation.
* Once the above criteria have been met, the LSC Officials Chair will review all the recommendations and may require an additional on-deck evaluation prior to certification. If required, you will be notified by email and an evaluation set up accordingly.

 When the above criteria have been met, the Starter (AP) will be emailed by USA Swimming with a link to your certification card that shows “Starter–Q”. Please allow USA Swimming 7-10 days to process this transaction.

**DECK REFEREE–APPRENTICE (AP)**

The following prerequisites must be met in order to commence apprenticeship on-deck as a Deck Referee:

* Current certification as a Stroke & Turn and Starter in Gulf Swimming LSC.
* Completion of the following online tests found on www.usaswimming.org:
* Referee
* Administrative Official
* Timing Judge
* Clerk of Course
* Starter Recertification-required if expired
* Stroke & Turn/Timer -required if expired
* Must work a minimum of six (6) sessions as certified Starter.
* Must attend a Deck Referee Apprentice clinic.
* Clinic availability will be posted on [Gulf Swimming website](https://www.teamunify.com/team/gslsc/page/home) presented by the Training Committee approved by the Officials Chair.

When the above criteria have been met, the Deck Referee (AP) will be emailed by USA Swimming with a link to your certification card that shows “Deck Referee–AP”. Please allow USA Swimming 7-10 days to process this transaction.

**DECK REFEREE–QUALIFIED (Q)**

In order to finalize certification as a Deck Referee in the LSC the apprentice must:

* Work on deck as a Deck referee apprentice under the guidance of other certified Deck Referees or Meet Referees for a minimum of ten (10) sessions.
* Must work a combination of both short and long course meets (Important for this level).
* Must work a combination of meets on behalf of several different host teams.
* Please note that certification is not automatic after completion of the minimum ten (10) sessions.
* The Deck Referee Apprentice must have proven that you are knowledgeable and capable of fulfilling this position in a capable and professional manner.
* The Deck Referee (AP) can request evaluation for a recommendation from the Meet Referee of the meet after completing the minimum sessions. Please make sure that when you do request an evaluation for recommendation, refer to the attached Deck Referee Training log as a guideline to meet all the requirements.
* Must request and successfully obtain positive recommendations from three (3) different Meet Referees but must be from three (3) separate meets from this level, one of whom must be an N3 certified Deck Referee with USA Swimming or approved by the LSC Officials Chair to attend the meet to accommodate this recommendation.
* Once the above criteria have been met, the LSC Officials Chair will review all the recommendations and may require an additional on-deck evaluation prior to certification. If required, you will be notified by email and an evaluation set up accordingly.

When the above criteria have been met, the Deck Referee (AP) will be emailed by USA Swimming with a link to your certification card that shows “Deck Referee–Q”. Please allow USA Swimming 7-10 days to process this transaction.

**MEET REFEREE – APPRENTICE (AP)**

The following pre-requisites must be met in order to commence apprenticeship on-deck as a Meet Referee:

* Must be currently certified at Stroke and Turn, Starter, Deck Referee and Chief Judge positions.
* Must attend a Meet Referee Apprentice Workshop presented by Training Committees approved by the Officials Committee Chair.
* Must pass all re-certification tests if expired.
* Must show a continuous active record of working as a certified Deck Referee to gain experience prior to being considered a Meet Referee Apprentice. This experience must include the following:
* Minimum of 24 sessions worked in the capacity of Deck Referee.
* At least 6 of these sessions must be worked at Prelims/Finals Championship format meets.
* At least 6 of these sessions must be worked at long course meets.
* At least 6 of these sessions must be worked at meets hosted by unaffiliated clubs.

When the above criteria have been met, the Meet Referee Apprentice will be emailed by USA Swimming with a link to your certification card that shows “Meet Referee (AP)” to assist with identifying the candidate as someone interested in certification at this level. Please allow USA Swimming 7-10 days to process this transaction.

Additionally, to be finalized certification as a Meet Referee in the GULF LSC, the apprentice must also:

* Attain at least one N2 certification at any position (preferably as N2 Deck Referee).
* Work as an Assistant Meet Referee for at least 3 full meets under the supervision of certified Gulf Swimming Meet Referees (minimum 3 sessions each meet, and at least one of these must be a long course meet). The Meet Referee (AP) must request in writing from the Officials Committee Chair assignments to work as an Assistant Meet Referee at these three meets at least six (6) weeks in advance of each meet.
* The Meet Referee(AP) can request an evaluation for recommendation from Meet Referee after completing the minimum sessions. Please make sure that when you do request an evaluation for recommendation and refer to the Meet Referee (AP) Training log as a guideline to meet all the requirements.
* Receive a minimum of 3 positive recommendations to certify from 3 different Gulf Swimming Meet Referees, two of whom must not be attached to the trainee's club. The three (3) supervising meet referees must have at least two (2) years experience as a Meet Referee in order to submit a valid recommendation. These recommendations must be based on positive performance by the apprentice while working in the capacity of Assistant Meet Referee by the supervising Meet Referees.
* Final process for certification to include a majority votes from all Gulf Swimming certified/active Meet Referees, approval from Officials Committees and final recommendation from by the Officials Chair.
* Once certified as Meet Referee-Q, your first meet will be required to be observed /mentor by any Senior certified GULF Meet Referee (at least 2 years as certified Meet Referee)

When the above criteria have been met, the Meet Referee (AP) will be emailed by USA Swimming with a link to your certification card that shows “Meet Referee–Q”. Please allow USA Swimming 7-10 days to process this transaction.

 **OPEN WATER JUDGE APPRENTICE**

**Education & Training/Clinic:**

* Must meet the initial requirements for an Official per USA swimming guidelines (successfully pass a Level II BGC, complete the APT and are properly credentialed by both USA Swimming and GULF Swimming).
* Must pass USA Swimming Open Water Judge test with a score of 80% or better prior to attending an Open Water Clinic/Event.
* When the above criteria have been met, the Open Water Judge (AP) will be emailed by USA Swimming with a link to your certification card that shows “Open Water Judge (AP)”. Please allow USA Swimming 7-10 days to process this transaction.
* Must attend an Open Water Clinic presented by Training Committees approved by the Official’s Chair.
* Clinic: send your request via email to GULF Open Water Meet Referee on the announcement.
* After you have completed the above requirements, you can request to be an Apprentice Open Water Judge in the GULF LSC by emailing to the Official’s Chair or their designee.

**OPEN WATER JUDGE CERTIFICATION**

**Evaluation & Certification:**

* Apprentice Open Water Judges must work a minimum of 2 meets under the supervision of the Open Water Meet Referee or their designee before being considered for certification. If this requirement is not met, the Apprentice Open Water Judge will need to begin the entire Trainee process again.
* After each meet the Apprentice Open Water Judges must present the necessary evaluation paperwork to the Meet Referee to fill out and return. One (1) Meet Referee recommendation is required to be certified as an Open Water Judge.
* The Open Water Judge (AP) can request evaluation for a recommendation from the Meet Referee of the meet after completing the minimum sessions. Please make sure that when you do request an evaluation for recommendation, refer to the Open water Training log as a guideline to meet all the requirements.
* As soon as all data has been verified by the LSC Officials Chair or their designee, the applicant will be certified as an Open Water Judge.
* When the above criteria have been met, the Open Water Judge (AP) will be emailed by USA Swimming with a link to your certification card that shows “OJ–Q”. Please allow 7-10 days to process this transaction.

**Renewal:**

* Must pass the USA Swimming Recertification test with a score of 80% or better every two (2) years.
* To maintain certification, must work a minimum of one (1) Open Water Events every three (3) years in any of the Open Water Judge positions
* Based on continuing USA Swimming membership and satisfactory per USA swimming membership and satisfaction.

**OPEN WATER REFEREE**

**Education & Training/Clinic:**

* Previous certification as an Open Water Judge.
* Must pass USA Swimming Open Water Referee test with a score of 80% or better prior to attending an Open Water Clinic/Event.
* Must attend an Open Water Clinic presented by Training Committees approved by the Official’s Chair.
* Clinic: send your request via email to GULF Open Water Meet Referee on the announcement.
* After you have completed the above requirements, you can request to be an Apprentice Open Water Judge in the GULF LSC by emailing to the Official’s Chair or their designee.

**Evaluation & Certification:**

* Apprentice Open Water Referee must work a minimum of 2 meets under the supervision of the Open Water Meet Referee or their designee before being considered for certification.
* If this requirement is not met, the Apprentice Open Water Referee will need to begin the entire Trainee process again.
* After each meet the Apprentice Open Water Referee must present the necessary evaluation paperwork to the Meet Referee to fill out and return.
* One (1) Meet Referee recommendation is required to be certified as an Open Water Judge.
* The Open Water Referee (AP) can request evaluation for a recommendation from the Meet Referee of the meet after completing the minimum sessions. Please make sure that when you do request an evaluation for recommendation, refer to the Open water Training log as a guideline to meet all the requirements.
* As soon as all data has been verified by the LSC Officials Chair or their designee, the applicant will be certified as an Open Water Judge.
* When the above criteria have been met, the Open Water Referee (AP) will be emailed by USA Swimming with a link to your certification card that shows “OR-Q”. Please allow 7-10 days to process.

**Renewal:**

* Must pass the USA Swimming Recertification test with a score of 80% or better every two (2) years.
* To maintain certification, must work a minimum of one (1) Open Water Events every three (3) years in any of the Open Water Judge positions
* Based on continuing USA Swimming membership and satisfactory per USA swimming membership and satisfaction.

**TRANSFER FROM OTHER LSC’S**

The National Officials Committee has adopted a policy that expects LSC’s to recognize the certified status of visiting and transferring officials from other USA Swimming LSC’s. Specific expectations for transferring officials and LSC’s are described on the USA Swimming website. The information below provides our local LSC policy regarding transfers:

1. Visiting officials are always welcome at all Gulf sanctioned meets.Meet assignments for visiting officials will be determined by the Meet Referee. Visiting officials should always notify the Meet Referee in advance so that appropriate meet assignments can be scheduled.

2. Officials relocating from other LSC’s are highly valued and always welcome to join our team of officials. Relocating officials should contact the Gulf Swimming LSC Officials Chair to provide information such as name, contact information, new club affiliation, and current certification(s). The Chair will add the transferring official to the Gulf officials list.

3. Any transferring official must register as a non-athlete with USA Swimming; if already registered in another LSC, the registration will need to be transferred to Gulf Swimming.The official must also have passed the Background Check and completed the online Athlete Protection Training.

4. For each level of certification, the skills and experience attained prior to transfer must meet the minimum requirements for certification at that level as outlined in this document before the official can be certified at that same level in the Gulf Swimming LSC. If additional skills or experience are needed to meet the minimum standards, then the relocating official will be certified at one level below their previous certification level, and the LSC will provide the needed opportunities for any training and/or meet experience so that the prior certification level can be reinstated in the Gulf Swimming LSC as soon as possible.

5. For transferring Stroke & Turn officials, the existing certification will be recognized automatically and transferred to Gulf Swimming. For all other positions (Starter, Chief Judge, Deck Referee, Meet Referee) certification transfer(s) will be made after a positive assessment of prior skills and experience has been completed.

 **REINSTATEMENT OF EXPIRED CERTIFICATION**

Officials with expired USA Swimming certifications who wish to be reinstated are always welcome back and should contact the Gulf Swimming Officials Chair to provide information such as name, contact information, club affiliation, and previous expired certification(s).

Reinstatement requirements will be handled on a case by case basis by the GULF Swimming LSC Officials Chair. However, in general, for certifications that have only been expired for a short period of time, the official will simply need to re-register, pass the required background check and athlete protection training (if expired) and take the recertification test(s) for the position(s) being reinstated.

For reinstatements of certifications that have been expired for lengthy periods of time, the official will need to work enough meets/sessions to demonstrate minimum skills; in this case, a positive assessment of skills will also be required.

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