

Club Officer 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 recognize 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. Athletes who have received a classification are not eligible for the 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.
- The designated co-signatory confirms the details as accurate to the best of their knowledge and signs the application form.
- 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.
- The holder must then ensure the certificate is presented to the Race Referee as soon as they arrive on venue and always in advance of their first competition.

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 you are expected to implement the Certificate amongst your members. We would like to reassure all Club Officers that co-signatories are not expected to assess the individual in any way. The purpose of a co-signatory is to confirm that the information provided is, to the best of their knowledge, accurate and honest. They are not expected to provide any medical expertise and should instead focus on whether the applicant's swimming is affected in the way stated. In the event of a swimwear exception application they are simply confirming the applicant's request. As a result, a co-signatory could reasonably be any appointed Club Officer or Club Coach.

With regards to completing the application form, co-signatories are welcome to complete this with the swimmer. Permission should always be requested first and no swimmer should be compelled to complete the form under supervision. However, the co-signatory will need to see the application prior to signing. For ease of completion, the awarding criteria are provided in Appendix 1 and will also be provided with every application form.

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:			

Competition Category:	Open/Female
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Email:	
Date of Birth:	
Swim England Membership Number:	

Exception Required:

☐	Swimwear (Section 2)	☐	Technical (Section 3)
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Section 2 – Swimwear Exception

Please note the exception afforded by this certificate refers to WA GR 5.1-3. '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 perform a 'Breaststroke Type' action with one (specify which) or both arms.

Legs: Unable to perform simultaneous leg movement.
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
	Start –Left/Right/Both	
	Arm(s) – Left/Right/Both	
	Leg(s) – Left/Right/Both	
	Turn/Finish	
	Arm(s) – Left/Right/Both	
	Leg(s)-Left/Right/Both	
	Turn/Finish	
	Start	
	Turn/Finish	
	Stroke	
	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.