

Athlete responsibilities and the classification process

What is International classification?

Classification is an assessment process, which groups athletes whose impairment causes similar limitations in a particular sport in order to support meaningful competition.

International classification is conducted by the International Federation for your sport, using specially trained classifiers to assess athletes following the international classification rules.

Identification of Classification for Athletes

- Athletes are required to attend classification according to the International Federation Classification masterlist at an event where international classification is offered.
- Athletes who are International New (N) or International Review (R) will be scheduled to attend classification prior to the commencement of competition.
- Your national federation's program manager will have information about when classification will be possible and the requirements for international classification.
- Prior to a competition, need to provide medical documentation to their national federation to provide to the International Federation. Each sport has specific medical diagnostic forms or processes to complete prior to any classification being scheduled.
- Classification information will be provided by event organisers and/or international federation, including the Classification Schedule which includes specific classification times for athletes.

What do I need to know about classification, my role and responsibilities?

Athletes are expected to understand the classification rules for their sport and attend international classification in their sport in order to compete as an athlete internationally.

The classification process follows the international classification rules published by International Federation for the sport. The rules for each sport are available on the international federation website federation.

Each sport aligns with the IPC Athlete Classification Code. Athletes and their support personnel have responsibilities under the IPC Athlete Classification Code, found at <https://www.paralympic.org/classification>.

What happens prior to Classification?

All athletes attending classification are required to provide medical diagnostic information (reports and supporting documentation) for classification.

- Medical Diagnostic information (and reports detailing diagnosis) will be requested by your national federation and needs to be provided within timeframes identified by your national federation. Athletes need a medical doctor and/or medical specialists to provide all details about the athletes diagnosis relevant to classification, including completion of a medical diagnostic form.
- Athletes may be required to provide other supporting medical documentation as detailed specialist, X-rays, MRI, studies or other scans that further outlines diagnosis and medical signs.

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- It is the athletes responsibility to provide all evidence required for classification.
- Medical documentation requirements are provided to the international federation, and may be reviewed before an athlete is added to a classification schedule at an event.

Athletes are encouraged to create a classification folder that has all your relevant medical information for classification and previous classification documentation (electronic and physical).

On the day of classification:

All Athletes scheduled for classification are advised that they:

- Must present at the Classification Centre at least 15 minutes before the allocated time on the classification schedule or as advised by the International Federation for your sport
- May be accompanied by one athlete representative. If English is not the athlete's first language an interpreter may also attend.
- Must bring passports and accreditation to classification.
- Must be appropriately dressed in sport clothes, as per a typical training session.
- Must bring Assistive aids or devices needed for participation in the competition. This includes strapping and other equipment.

An athlete undertaking classification should:

- Be truthful and honest in all classification matters, including best effort in all classification tests
- Answer all questions during the classification process and declare any medications prescribed and taken, equipment or assistive aids that are used. Ask questions if not clear on what is being asked
- An athlete representative may respond if athlete provides incorrect information or extra information missed.
- Ask what sport class they have been given and the sport class status

What happens during classification?

Classifiers work together on a panel in order to assess and determine the following:

1. *Assessment of Eligible Impairment Type*

Athletes must have an eligible physical impairment type, including an underlying health condition that leads to an eligible impairment type as defined by the international federation classification rules for your sport. Note this may occur prior to attending classification by some international federations.

2. *Assessment of Minimum Impairment Criteria*

Athletes must meet the minimal impairment criteria as assessed by a panel of classifiers and defined by the international federation classification rules for your sport to be eligible to compete. If an athlete undergoes classification at this event and does not meet minimal eligibility criteria then they will not be permitted to compete in the event entered.

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3. Allocation of Sport Class and Sport Class Status

As a component of the classification assessment a panel of classifiers will allocate a sport class and a sport class status for competition. An athlete is required to compete under their international sport class allocated, both in international competition and also Australian domestic competition.

Athletes must be included on a classification schedule to attend classification at an event. An athlete attends classification with an athlete representative (generally this is a team physio, team manager or coach).

Classification process generally includes some or all the following steps:

Medical diagnostic provision (pre-competition)	Provision of medical diagnostic information to prove underlying health condition and eligible impairment
Consent for classification process	Athlete signs consent form, witnessed by athlete representative. The representative should ensure that the athlete is aware of obligations.
Medical Assessment (pre-competition)	Review of medical diagnostic information and assessment of impairment (measurement of limbs, range of movement, muscle strength) as per the tests in the classification rules
Technical assessment (pre-competition)	Assessment of sport specific skills, athletes will be asked to demonstrate relevant movement and skills for their sport as per the tests in the classification rules
Pre-competition notification of outcome	Outcomes for competition, athletes may be subject to competition observation
Observation during competition	Observation and assessment of sports specific movement in competition (if required)
Notification of final outcome	Final class outcome. Athletes are notified of sport class and sport class status.

Technical assessment and competition review occur at the discretion of classifiers.

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Protests and Appeals

Have any discussions about your concerns about your classification prior to the classification or immediately after with your coach and team manager. There are specific rules and deadlines that relate to disputing your classification. Not agreeing with your classification is not enough to protest or appeal, there needs to be a clear breach of the rules in order to dispute further.

If you are concerned about a possible breach of the classification rules or process, it must be raised immediately with your athlete representative, coach or team manager.

Intentional Misrepresentation

Intentional Misrepresentation is cheating in Paralympic sport. It is a deliberate attempt by an athlete or athlete support personnel (either by fact or omission) to misrepresent:

- the existence or extent of skills and/or abilities relevant to a Para-sport; and/or
- the degree and/or nature of eligible impairment

Serious sanctions apply for athletes and athlete support personnel (including athlete representatives) who encourage athletes to misrepresent their true abilities or skills.

Also refer to <https://www.paralympic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Intentional-Misrepresentation-Information-for-Athletes-and-Athlete-representatives.pdf>

Codes of Conduct

- It is an athletes responsibility to be well informed about all elements related to classification process, as well as the requirements and responsibilities for Athletes outlined in the Classification Rules for your sport, and the IPC Athlete Classification Code and International Standards

Athletes may also wish to refer to the below IPC document.

https://www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/document/170221101756974_2017_01%2BAthletes%2BReference%2BGuide_ENG.pdf

- Classifiers are bound by a Code of conduct and should treat athletes and their representatives in a manner that is professional, respectful and safe at all times. Classifiers should provide you with sufficient information to understand the process, the decision, and the opportunities for protest or clarification. All information obtained during classification is treated confidentially.

Where do I go for further information?

Refer to the specific event information documents and International Federation classification rules or your sport in the first instance. For generic information please contact

Organisation	Website and contact details
Paralympics Australia	Classification Services + 61 2 9704 0500 classification@paralympic.org.au www.paralympic.org.au