

Coaching Accreditation and Licencing Guidelines

Version 1.5

Swimming coaches are accredited under the Australian Sports Commission's National Coach Accreditation Scheme (NCAS). As part of the accreditation process a swimming coach must provide evidence of a current working with children check and hold current ASCTA membership.

A swimming coach is "licenced" by maintaining Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA) general or premium membership. Part of the membership fees are redistributed through professional development activities, direct grants or funding/ underwriting arrangements for mentor coaches, conferences or support staff in SSO's offices. ASCTA general or premium membership requires the signing of a prohibited person declaration; ongoing ethical and professional conduct and abeyance to the Codes of Conduct.

Every 4 years, a desk audit of a coach's professional development is undertaken by ASCTA as part of an approved reaccreditation process.

Under present protocols, Swimming Australia and the state swimming associations usually allow current, licenced coaches access to the warm up pool and sometimes also to specific pool deck concourse coaching viewing areas when the swimming coach has swimmers competing at the meet. At state swimming association meets, admission is sometimes also free.

In order to determine if swimming coaches are accredited and licenced, a number of recommended mechanisms may be used, either individually or in conjunction with each other.

1. SAL and SSO's may submit a list of swimming coaches' names to ASCTA. ASCTA will review the names, contact any swimming coach who is not licenced, and provide a status report of all swimming coaches by return email to whoever supplied the list.
2. Licenced swimming coaches should be able to produce a current ASCTA membership card. The card details their name, has a large year of expiry in the top right hand corner and also lists their membership level and accreditations. Coloured cards indicate Premium membership is held. White cards indicate general or basic level membership, so they must be checked for membership type. Very few coaches are basic members as they are not licenced. When a coach selects basic membership they are contacted by ASCTA. Usually they are not actively coaching.
3. If a swimming coach has only recently renewed their ASCTA membership, as a coach's membership is processed an online receipt is automatically emailed to the coach. This can also be used as evidence of current ASCTA membership.
4. Finally with a username and password can be supplied by ASCTA to approved people from an SSO. This person can then access the coach database in real time and verify status of coaches and other ASCTA members. This permission will only provide a limited view of the person's details.

ASCTA recommends that Meet Directors at sanctioned swim meets ensure all swimming coaches gaining access to the warm up area and pool deck are licenced. Any infringements of the Code of Conduct can then easily be dealt with by ASCTA either alone or in tandem with SAL or an SSO when agreed to.

ASCTA believe that a prudent risk management strategy encompassing both security and safety for swim meets includes ensuring only vetted officials (including coaches) should have pool deck access.

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To support the endeavours of SAL and SSO's to ensure only licenced coaches gain pool deck access, ASCTA has supplied (and can supply additional upon request) lanyards that have printed "ASCTA" and "licenced and accredited" along with a plastic display sleeve that will hold their coach licence card. Be aware that if the lanyard is attached correctly the membership card should appear face up. If the membership card is turned over, it should be checked as this is an action swimming coaches have previously used to hide out of date cards.

ASCTA will also email swimming coaches regarding the procedures from time to time, send reminders and reinforce the swim meet requirements through our regular communications to swimming coaches. Should a swimming coach seek to gain access to pool deck without the relevant ASCTA membership card on display and upon investigation is subsequently found to be licenced, ASCTA can supply lanyards and a temporary coach card that can be issued for a single entry. We strongly encourage the issuer of these temporary cards to maintain a register of temporary card holders and ensure that all temporary cards are returned each day.

ASCTA believe that every swimming coach on pool deck should be easily identifiable. As a condition of their entry, Coaches agree to the Meet Director's requirements with respect to displaying their licence card. A gatekeeper or ASCTA branch representative should check all accreditations at the point of entry to the aquatic facility and again at any access point to pool deck.

If no coaching licence evidence can be supplied by a swimming coach, ASCTA suggest that entry be refused. The identity of a swimming coach known to the gatekeeper should not be sufficient evidence to permit entry. Physical evidence or a valid verification of a coaching licencing should be supplied in all instances.

ASCTA also recommends that swimming coaches who are not currently licenced should be ineligible to be selected on district, regional, state or national teams, receive ASCTA benevolent support, coach funding or be eligible to mentor, course present or be recognised as a swimming coach.

It is questionable whether an un-licenced coach is insured, even if they hold a current insurance policy (similar to an un-licenced card driver). Unlicenced coaches have not agreed to be bound by the Codes of Conduct, may not have a current working with children check or signed a prohibited person declaration thus making disciplinary action much harder to undertake.