

NSW Pathways Academy - Athlete Selection Guidelines

1. PURPOSE

(a) The purpose of these Selection Guidelines is to support the identification and selection of athletes into the **NSW Pathways Academy Program**.

(b) The NSW Pathways Academy aims to support the development of talented surf sports athletes aged **15–17 years** by providing access to structured athlete development opportunities including skill development camps, athlete education and performance support.

(c) These Guidelines are intended to ensure that the selection process is conducted in a **fair, transparent and consistent manner** while identifying athletes who demonstrate:

- surf sports skill capability
- long-term development potential
- commitment and attitude aligned with the values of Surf Life Saving NSW.

2. INTERPRETATION

(a) Unless the context otherwise requires, terms used in these Guidelines shall have the same meaning as those used in the **SLSNSW Constitution and Regulations**.

(b) The NSW Pathways Academy is an **athlete development program**, and selections will consider both **current capability and future potential**.

(c) No single selection criterion shall automatically guarantee selection.

(d) Selection decisions will consider the **overall athlete profile** in relation to the objectives of the NSW Pathways Academy.

3. SELECTION

3.1 NSW Pathways Academy Selection Panel

(a) A Selection Panel will be appointed by Surf Life Saving NSW to select athletes into the NSW Pathways Academy.

(b) The Selection Panel may include representatives such as:

- Surf Sports Manager (or nominee)
- Performance Pathways staff
- Surf Sports coaches or technical advisors

(c) The Chair of the Selection Panel will convene meetings required to complete selections.

3.2 Athlete Eligibility

(a) Athletes must nominate through the **application process established by Surf Life Saving NSW** within the identified timeframe.

(b) All athletes must:

- be current financial members of a Surf Life Saving Club
- hold relevant proficiency awards
- comply with SLSNSW regulations and policies.

(c) Athletes must meet the **age eligibility criteria** specified for the NSW Pathways Academy intake.

3.3 Selection Criteria

The Selection Panel may consider the following criteria when assessing applicants.

(a) Competition Performance and Surf Sports Skill Level

Selectors may consider an athlete's **competition performances and current surf sports skill level** as indicators of their ability to apply surf sports skills in training and competition environments.

In assessing this criterion, selectors may consider:

- performances at relevant competitions including
 - NSW Interbranch Championships,
 - NSW Surf Life Saving Championships (State)
 - Australian Surf Life Saving Championships (Aussies)
 - Other nominated surf sports carnivals or competitions.
- placings, rankings and consistency of performance
- technical competency in surf sports disciplines
- ability to perform surf sports skills in surf conditions
- versatility across relevant surf sports events.

Competition performances will be considered as **one component of the overall assessment** and will be evaluated alongside other selection criteria.

(b) Athlete Development Potential

Selectors may consider the athlete's **long-term development potential and capacity to benefit from the program**.

In assessing development potential, selectors may consider:

- the athlete's capacity to learn and apply technical feedback
- evidence of improvement in performance or skills over time
- physical development and athletic progression relative to age
- coachability and commitment to training
- motivation to improve and engage in the development program.

The Selection Panel may select athletes who demonstrate **strong long-term development potential**, even where current competition results are still developing relative to their peers.

Selectors may also consider the athlete's **age relative to the eligibility period**, acknowledging that athletes born later within the age group may be at an earlier stage of physical development.

(c) Athlete Commitment, Attitude and Coach Feedback

Selectors may consider the athlete's **commitment to training, behaviour and alignment with the values of Surf Life Saving**.

In assessing this criterion, selectors may consider:

- training consistency and preparation
- willingness to accept coaching feedback
- work ethic and coachability
- positive attitude towards learning and development
- behaviour consistent with the values of Surf Life Saving.

Selectors may also seek **feedback from the athlete's coach** regarding the athlete's skill development, attitude, work ethic and long-term potential.

(d) Multi-Discipline Capability

Surf Life Saving is a **multi-discipline sport** requiring athletes to develop skills across water and beach events.

Selectors may consider the athlete's ability and willingness to develop across multiple surf sports disciplines, including:

- water events such as surf swimming, board paddling, ski paddling and iron events
- beach events such as beach sprinting and beach flags.

Athletes who demonstrate **versatility across disciplines and a willingness to develop broad surf sports skills** may be considered favourably as this aligns with the objectives of the NSW Pathways Academy to develop well-rounded surf sports athletes.

(e) Program Objectives and Cohort Balance

Selectors may consider the **overall objectives of the NSW Pathways Academy when forming the final cohort of athletes**.

In determining the final group of selected athletes, the Selection Panel may consider factors including:

- providing development opportunities across Surf Life Saving NSW regions
- supporting athletes with strong development potential
- maintaining an appropriate balance of athletes across disciplines and development stages
- identifying athletes who are likely to benefit from participation in the program.

Regional representation may be considered to support athlete development opportunities across New South Wales. However, all selected athletes must demonstrate the capability and potential to benefit from participation in the NSW Pathways Academy.

(f) Holistic Assessment

Selection into the NSW Pathways Academy will be based on a **holistic assessment of each athlete** against the selection criteria outlined in this section.

No single criterion will automatically determine selection or non-selection. The Selection Panel will consider the **overall athlete profile**, including current capability, development potential, commitment to training, and alignment with the objectives of the NSW Pathways Academy.

In applying a holistic assessment, the Selection Panel may consider how an athlete's strengths across multiple criteria contribute to their suitability for the program. Athletes may therefore be selected where the Selection Panel determines that the athlete demonstrates strong overall potential to benefit from participation in the NSW Pathways Academy.

The Selection Panel retains discretion to determine the final cohort of athletes, taking into account the collective balance of the group and the development objectives of the program.

3.4 Selection Procedure

- (a) Athletes must submit an application through the official **NSW Pathways Academy Application Form**.
- (b) The Selection Panel will review all applications and supporting information.
- (c) The Selection Panel may consider any information relevant to the selection criteria including:
- athlete application responses
 - coach endorsement
 - athlete development indicators.
- (d) The Selection Panel shall have discretion in determining the final cohort of athletes selected.
- (e) The Selection Panel may determine the number of athletes selected, subject to program capacity.
- (f) A **majority decision of the Selection Panel** will determine selections.
- (g) Subject to these Guidelines, the decision of the Selection Panel shall be final.

3.5 Program Composition

- (a) The NSW Pathways Academy cohort will consist of **up to approximately 50 athletes**.
- (b) Surf Life Saving NSW reserves the right to adjust the number of athletes selected across regions where appropriate.
- (c) The Selection Panel may consider regional representation when selecting the final cohort.

3.6 Notification of Selection

(a) Completion of Selection Process

Once the Selection Panel has completed the assessment of all applications and determined the final cohort of athletes for the NSW Pathways Academy, the selections will be submitted to the **Surf Sports Manager (or nominee)** for confirmation and administrative processing.

Where required, the final cohort may be presented to the **Surf Sports Standing Committee or appropriate SLNSW authority for endorsement**.

(b) Notification of Successful Applicants

Athletes selected into the NSW Pathways Academy will be notified **via email to the athlete and their parent/guardian** as soon as practicable following completion of the selection process.

The notification will include:

- confirmation of selection into the NSW Pathways Academy
- an outline of program expectations and commitments
- dates of planned program activities and camps
- the program levy and payment requirements
- required documentation including athlete agreements and consent forms
- a deadline by which athletes must confirm acceptance of their position.

Athletes will normally be provided up to **7 days to confirm acceptance of selection**.

Failure to confirm acceptance within the specified timeframe may result in the athlete's position being offered to another applicant.

(c) Notification of Unsuccessful Applicants

Athletes who are not selected into the NSW Pathways Academy will be notified **via email to the athlete and parent/guardian** following confirmation of the final cohort.

The notification will:

- advise that the athlete was not selected in the current intake
- acknowledge the athlete's application and commitment to surf sports
- encourage the athlete to continue their development through club and branch programs
- provide information regarding future opportunities to apply for the NSW Pathways Academy where applicable.

Where possible, communication will emphasise that the program is **highly competitive and selection does not reflect a lack of ability or future potential**.

(d) Communication with Clubs and Branches

Following notification of athletes, Surf Life Saving NSW may provide relevant **Branch Directors of Surf Sports** with a list of athletes selected from their respective Branch.

Clubs may also be informed of athletes selected from their club once athletes have confirmed acceptance.

This communication ensures appropriate coordination between **SLSNSW, Branches, Clubs, and Academy athletes**.

(e) Public Announcement

Following confirmation of athlete acceptance, Surf Life Saving NSW may publish the list of selected athletes through appropriate communication channels including:

- SLSNSW website
- SLSNSW surf sports communications
- social media platforms
- club and branch communications.

Athlete names may be published along with their **Surf Life Saving Club affiliation**.

(f) Feedback Requests

Due to the number of applications received, individualised feedback may not always be available.

Where appropriate, Surf Life Saving NSW may provide **general feedback or development guidance** to applicants regarding pathways for continued development within surf sports.

Athletes are encouraged to continue working with their **club coaches and branch development programs** to support their ongoing progression.

3.7 Removal from the Program

An athlete may be removed from the NSW Pathways Academy Program if they:

- (i) Breach or fail to observe SLSNSW policies, regulations or agreements.
- (ii) Fail to meet participation expectations of the program.
- (iii) Are unable to participate due to illness or injury.
- (iv) Fail to comply with the SLSA Anti-Doping Policy.

4. APPEAL

(a) An aggrieved person may appeal against the failure of the Selection Panel to comply with the procedures set down in these Guidelines.

(b) Appeals may only be made on **procedural grounds**, not on the merits of a particular selection decision.

(c) Any appeal under this clause will proceed in accordance with the **SLSA Constitution and Regulations**