

Sport Inclusion Australia
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Sport Inclusion
A U S T R A L I A

Drive Inclusion through Sport

Eligibility Policy

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[Policy](#)

Introduction

Sport Inclusion Australia, SIA is a National Sporting Organisation established in 1986 to assist the inclusion of people with an impairment, primarily an intellectual impairment into the mainstream community using sport as the medium. Sport Inclusion Australia is the Australian member of Virtus, World Intellectual Impairment Sport.

Our **Purpose** is to build a more inclusive community.

SIA facilitates, educates and supports sporting organisations and the wider community about the power of sport to deliver social inclusion, while advocating for the rights of all Australians to be treated with dignity.

Our **Mission** is to drive inclusion through sport.

The philosophy has never wavered 'Promote sporting opportunities for people with an impairment in mainstream settings with sport owning and delivering sport for all Australians at the appropriate ability level with a 'person first' approach'.

We want to make sure no one is left behind.

Purpose

A significant component of Sport Inclusion Australia's role in the promotion of competitive opportunities for athletes with an intellectual impairment is to ensure that all such inclusion is based on equity and fair play.

As such, Sport Inclusion Australia is committed to the implementation and facilitation of a just and unbiased eligibility system for athletes with an intellectual impairment at regional, state, national to international level.

Sport Inclusion Australia works closely with National Sporting Organisations, Paralympics Australia, School Sport Australia and others as required to establish systems which meet the respective sport's needs and then process all eligibility documentation accordingly. SIA also works with Virtus to build strong eligibility systems where athletes can access competition pathways.

Core Policy

This document outlines the policy and procedures adopted by Sport Inclusion Australia to ensure compliance with international standards for determining intellectual impairment to ensure a fair and equitable base, where athletes with an intellectual impairment compete against records, standards or other athletes with an intellectual impairment.

It also details the Primary eligibility standards for national and international level applications and the respective protests and appeals process.

Procedures

Responsibilities

Athletes and or their advocates are responsible for submitting a complete application with all necessary documentation to verify that they meet the respective eligibility criteria along with additional supporting documentation such as photos and payment of the applicable fee.

Sport Inclusion Australia will work with the athletes and or their advocated to assist with the submission and assessment of applications, ensuring they are processed within a timely manner including all associated processes such as printing of registration card and uploading names on the masterlists.

Where athletes are deemed not to be eligible, Sport Inclusion Australia will provide athletes and or their advocates with a full explanation of why they were assessed as ineligible.

Sport Inclusion Australia is responsible for identifying and appointing a National Eligibility Officer, NEO, who verifies all VIRTUS applications before being forwarded to the VIRTUS Secretariat.

Eligibility Types

II1 – Athletes with an Intellectual Disability

The Primary Eligibility Criteria used by VIRTUS and subsequently Sport Inclusion Australia is based upon the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental disability (AAIDD, 2010) definition of intellectual disability which is consistent with that of the World Health Organisation (WHO, ICD-10 and ICF, 2001) and states:

“Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitation both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before the age of 18”

- i. Significant impairment in intellectual functioning. This is defined as two standard deviations below the mean – a full IQ score of 75 or lower.
- ii. Significant limitations in Adaptive Behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills. This is defined as performance that is at least two standard deviations below the mean.
- iii. Evidence that the intellectual disability was evident at or before the age of 18.

Diagnosis of Intellectual Functioning must be made using an internationally recognised and professionally administered IQ test recognised by VIRTUS. (Wechsler Intelligence Scales – WISC (for children aged 6-16) or WAIS (for adults aged 16-90), e.g. SSAIS and MAWIE etc, Stanford-Binet {for ages 2-85+} or Raven Matrices).

Diagnoses of Adaptive Behaviour must be made using internationally recognised and professionally administered a standardised measure that has been norm -referenced on the general population including people with disabilities. Tests recognised by VIRTUS -Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales, ABAS or AAMR Adaptive Behaviour Scales.

Athletes must meet all 3 elements of the criteria to be eligible and included on the masterlist as having an intellectual disability to compete.

II2 – Athletes with more significant impairment

Initially, II2 will be restricted to athletes with Trisomy 21 or Translocation Down syndrome (note athletes with Mosaic Down syndrome may only apply to II1).

WHO defines Down syndrome as ‘an intellectual impairment caused by extra genetic material in chromosome 21’

Based upon this definition, the eligibility criteria for athletes with Down syndrome is:

- i. Formal diagnosis of Trisomy 21 or Translocation Down syndrome, and
- ii. A statement that the athlete is clear of symptomatic Atlantoaxial instability (AAI) – a common orthopaedic problem seen in people with Down syndrome.

Note: The criteria for this group will be revised and expanded as the project progresses/research data becomes available.

II3 – Athletes with Autism (no intellectual disability)

Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as it is now commonly known, is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a ‘group of complex brain development disorders. This umbrella term covers conditions such as autism and Asperger syndrome. These disorders are characterised by difficulties in social interaction and communication and a restricted and repetitive repertoire of interests and activities’ (WHO Autism Q & R Factsheet, 2016 (<http://www.who.int/features/qa/85/en/>))

Based upon this definition, the eligibility criteria for athletes with autism is:

- i. A full scale IQ of 76 or above or no diagnosis of intellectual disability; and
- ii. A formal diagnosis of Autism, ASD or Asperger’s syndrome carried out by a qualified practitioner, using accepted diagnostic techniques.

Note: Please be advised that these criteria are subject to change following the VIRTUS trial project.

Process

Eligibility application forms can be lodged by email, mail or in person at the Sport Inclusion Australia office.

The SIA eligibility officer will review all applications and where necessary seek additional information.

Once satisfied that all requirements have been met and the application is complete with all supporting documentation, the application will be forwarded to the CEO SIA to approve.

Note: Additional information may be requested at any stage of the application process and if at any stage an athlete is deemed ineligible, they are informed and can follow the Appeals procedures.

There are three levels of Eligibility Registration

- 1- **National Eligibility** (for Events in Australia only)
- 2- **VIRTUS/IPC II1**(for International events e.g. Virtus, Global Games, IPC and some other identified National events)
- 3- **VIRTUS II1, II2 and II3** (for International events e.g. Virtus, Global Games and some other identified events)

[National Eligibility – II1, II2 and II3 National-Eligibility-Application-form-March-2020.pdf \(sportinclusionaustralia.org.au\)](#)

The following process applies to National Eligibility:

- Eligibility application forms received must be signed by a professional working in the area of intellectual impairment with appropriate evidence attached.
- The SIA Eligibility Officer will check application forms, at which point additional information may be requested.
- Once satisfied, the application is forwarded to the SIA CEO for endorsement.
- SIA stores information according to the SIA Privacy Policy.
- Athlete's name and details are added to SIA database and masterlist;
- A summary is also forwarded to relevant Member organisation and sporting organisation;
- Registration letter and card is printed and forwarded to the athlete with receipt of registration cost.

[VIRTUS/IPC Eligibility – II1 \(Intellectual Disability\) Reg form v9 Nov19.docx \(sportinclusionaustralia.org.au\)](#)

The following process applies to the VIRTUS/IPC Eligibility:

- Eligibility application forms received must have the appropriate evidence attached, e.g., Approved Psychological testing detailed above and must be conducted within 5 years and testing sheets included.
- The SIA Eligibility Officer will check application forms, at which point additional information may be requested.
- Once satisfied, the application is forwarded to the SIA CEO for endorsement.
- Forms are scanned and sent electronically to SIA's National Eligibility Officer NEO (Volunteer) for endorsement.
- Once ratified by NEO, SIA stores all information according to the SIA Privacy Policy.
- Finalised applications are forwarded electronically to VIRTUS.
- Once approved by VIRTUS, endorsed Athlete's name and details are added to SIA database and masterlist
- A summary is also forwarded to relevant Member organisation and sporting organisation.
- Registration letter and card is printed and forwarded to the athlete with receipt of registration cost.
- VIRTUS adds athlete, sport and country to the master list.
- Only athletes receiving an VIRTUS eligibility number may proceed to Sports Classification.

[VIRTUS Eligibility – II2 \(Additional Impairment\) & II3 \(Autism without Intellectual disability\) Reg form v9 Nov19.docx \(sportinclusionaustralia.org.au\)](#)

The following process applies to the VIRTUS Eligibility:

- II2 application forms must be signed by a qualified medical practitioner with appropriate evidence attached. (E.g. Genetic testing in case of Down syndrome).
- II3 application forms do not need a signature, but do require evidence of a psychological test with IQ above 75 and a diagnosis of Autism, ASD or Asperger's syndrome.
- The SIA Eligibility Officer will check application forms, at which point additional information may be requested.
- Once satisfied, the application is forwarded to the SIA CEO for endorsement.

- Forms are scanned and sent electronically to SIA’s National Eligibility Officer NEO (Volunteer) for endorsement.
- Once ratified by NEO, SIA stores all information according to the SIA Privacy Policy.
- Finalised applications are forwarded electronically to VIRTUS.
- Once approved by VIRTUS, endorsed Athlete’s name and details are added to SIA database and masterlist
- A summary is also forwarded to relevant Member organisation and sporting organisation.
- Registration letter and card is printed and forwarded to the athlete with receipt of registration cost.
- VIRTUS adds athlete, sport and country to the I12 and I13 master list.

International – IPC Sports

For athletes competing in IPC sports of Athletics, Swimming and Table Tennis, the International – VIRTUS Eligibility is the first step in their Paralympic eligibility/classification process. To be eligible to compete in World Para Athletics, World Para Swimming and International Table Tennis Federation – Para events athletes must have completed the VIRTUS International Eligibility process (Primary Eligibility) and be listed on the VIRTUS International Masterlist.

Only athletes in the I1-1 group are eligible to compete in IPC events.

Appeals

For athletes who are deemed to be ineligible, they can appeal the decision.

Appeals Policy and Procedure

1. Where an athlete is deemed ineligible for competition, they may appeal the decision within 28 days. This should be done in writing to the SIA CEO.
2. The application, together with any additional evidence will be sent to the original decision makers for further consideration.
3. A Notice of Appeal must:
 - i. Specify the party who is requesting the Appeal;
 - ii. Provide the name of the Athlete who is the subject of the Appeal;
 - iii. Identify the decision being Appealed, by attaching a copy of the decision or briefly summarise;
 - iv. Specify the grounds for the Appeal;
 - v. Appeals must be accompanied by the Appeal Fee (\$50).
4. Appeals regarding eligibility procedure
 - a. Where the Appeal concerns a decision regarding eligibility, the relevant paperwork(including the Appeal) will be sent to the Chief Executive Officer of Sport Inclusion Australia and the National Eligibility Officer involved in determining the athletes eligibility.
 - b. The decision of the appeal committee will be made within 28 days of receipt, and the athlete will be notified accordingly.
 - c. If the appeal is turned down, then the decision will be final and a new application may not be made for a period of two years.
5. Confidentiality
 - a. Appeal proceedings are confidential. The parties and the Appeal committee shall not disclose facts or other information relating to the dispute or the proceedings.

Related Documents

- Privacy Policy
- Selection Policy
- Member Protection Policy