



TECHNICAL OFFICIALS EDUCATION PROGRAM

SWMTOFFOWS **Referee (Specialist Extensions)** Open Water Swimming (OWS)

LEARNER GUIDE

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Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

SAL Technical Officials Accreditation Program LEARNER GUIDE



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About this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide has been developed by Swimming Australia Ltd (SAL) to support candidates undertaking **Unit 10.2 Referee OWS** within the SAL **Technical Officiating Accreditation Program**. This Learner Guide is designed to be used in conjunction with face-to-face training and extensive workplace supervision.

Referee – OWS Accreditation

The **Referee – OWS** accreditation is an extension course for those individuals who have completed the Referee accreditation and wish to increase their knowledge of officiating at OWS events.

Please Note: Before beginning this course an individual must have completed the **Referee Accreditation**. For information about how to complete this accreditation, please contact your State Swimming Association.

SAL would like to thank Swimming Queensland and McLaughlin Sports Consultancy for their work in the development of this resource.

This resource corresponds to the following Units of Competency within the Technical Officials Accreditation Program:

SWMTOFF010.2

What is a Competency?

A competency can be defined as “the application of specific knowledge and skill to a required standard of performance in a given situation” (ASC RIA Manual, 2000, p27).

A competency can include a number of aspects of performance, such as:

- Applied Skills (e.g. being able to demonstrate specific skills)

- Management Skills (i.e. being able to prepare, plan and organise)
- Contingency Management Skills (i.e. being able to fix problems as they arise)
- Inter-personal Skills (i.e. being able to deal effectively with others)

Usually all four of these areas are considered.

What is Competency Based Assessment?

- **Criterion Based**

Candidates are assessed against a set of specific performance criteria or benchmarks, NOT against each other.

- **Evidence Based**

Decisions, about whether a person is competent or not, are based upon evidence provided by the candidate.

- **Participatory Processes are used**

The candidate is involved in planning and arranging assessment processes wherever possible. They have some input to assist them to achieve competency.

How Do I Use this Learner Guide?

The Learner Guide provides you with the information and activities that will enable you to develop competency, within the aforementioned unit of competency.

You can develop competency in these units through a combination of methods, including:

- Reading the material in this Learner Guide.
- Asking questions about any anything you don't understand.
- Observing others in a workplace.
- Practicing the skills you are learning in PRACTICAL SITUATIONS.

- Completing the activities in this Learner Guide.
- Completing the assessment activities to demonstrate your skills and knowledge.

Case studies and examples are used throughout this Learner Guide to clarify your understanding.

What Resources Do I Need?

The main resource you will need to complete the learning for this program is this Learner Guide. You will also need a copy of the current FINA / SAL Swimming Rules and access to swimming events where you can be practically assessed as a Referee.

What if I Already Have the Skills?

You may already have some or all of the skills or knowledge required for this unit of competency. If this is the case, you may not have to undertake additional training in these areas.

You can ask your State/Territory Swimming Association for an initial assessment of your **current competence** to determine what skills you have and whether you need additional training. If you would like to attempt to gain formal recognition of your existing skills, you will be required to complete a detailed Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) application form that will allow an assessor to review your skills against the specific requirements for this course. **Discuss this process with State/Territory Swimming Association.**

What about Assessment?

When you complete the assessment within this Learner Guide and are assessed as competent by your assessor in a PRACTICAL OFFICIATING ENVIRONMENT, you will be eligible to receive a certificate from SAL.

To undertake assessment for this program, you will need to complete the assessment tasks found at the end of the Learner Guide. Wherever possible, you will be assessed at a swim meet to ensure relevance of the process.

The assessment process is what is known as **integrated assessment**. This means that several elements / performance criteria are grouped together and assessed at the same time using one assessment task.

The assessment activities are found in the final section within the Learner Guide and can be identified by the icon below.



Official Assessment

How Do I Start?

You can undertake the activities in the Learner Guide at your own pace, or under the supervision of your trainer / mentor.

You are ready to start.

SWMTOFFOWS (UNIT 10):

Referee OWS

This unit outlines a range of general skills that are required by Referees.

Introduction

The responsibilities of the Referee are many and varied. The over-riding function is to see that a meet is properly conducted in regard to applying the rules, and, in all ways, assuring the swimmers of fair competitive conditions.

It is impossible to cover all the duties of the Referee in this Learner Guide and that is why the vast majority of learning and all assessment is to be undertaken in a real / practical swim meet environment.

Assessment

The key learning experience in this unit **must occur in a real, practical swim meet environment. This is also where assessment against all performance criteria must take place.**

General Roles and Responsibilities of the OWS Referee

The OWS Referee must have a thorough and tested knowledge of the rules of Open Water Swimming.

- There is no substitute for the Rule Book. You should ensure that there is a current copy readily available at every meet. It may be thought that what may be a good personal working knowledge of the rules is sufficient. Conversely it is surprising how easy it is to forget some of the finer points. Any deviation from them invites controversy.
- You must ensure that an adequate number of officials are available.
- The OWS Referee should instruct the officials as to their duties, and any details of procedure they should be following.
- The OWS Referee is, in a sense, the judge and jury, the arbiter of problems and protests. With that responsibility, it is essential that decisions are correct and completely impartial. If people have confidence in the OWS Referee's

knowledge, judgement and sense of justice, there will be little trouble in having decisions accepted without reservation.

- Rules are written to cover as wide a range of circumstances as their composers could conceive. But there are times where unusual conditions exist and some questions may arise that are not covered by the rules. They should be answered according to your best judgement (**always document these decisions**).
- Any protests concerning the competition itself are made to the OWS Referee by the swimmer's Team Manager or coach in writing, within thirty minutes of the announcement of disqualification or the cause for protest.
- Two hours prior to the commencement of the competition, you should review the conditions of the meet, carry out your own Risk Assessment and test the water temperature in accordance with the rules.
- It is your responsibility that the competitive equipment is adequate. Are the turn buoys ballasted and properly secured? Is the finish line in the best position for judging the finish? Have you checked the course with a GPS and is the course free off hazards? Has provision been made for swimmer safety and swimmer recovery?
- Will the Registering and Competitor Numbering Area be adequate for the number of competitors expected? These details should be attended to by **The Meet Director**. It continues as the responsibility of the OWS Referee that proper conditions are in place.
- Prior to the start of competition give a verbal pre race briefing to all technical officials and all competitors.
- There should be no coaching of swimmers from the time swimmers report to the Clerk of the Course in the pre race assembly area. That is best achieved by not permitting coaches in the assembly area.
- Coaching and the giving of instructions by the swimmer's representative from a designated feeding station or escort safety craft are permitted.
- The OWS Referee should notify all recommendations by Assistant OWS Referee's, Turn Judges and authorised Marshals as to the method of notification of infraction reports. Written infraction reports **MUST** be delivered promptly to the OWS Referee and nobody else at the end of the event. Finish Judges and Timekeepers, must report their results without regard to any possible or definite disqualification.

- The OWS Referee assumes total responsibility for all disqualifications during the competition.

Open Water Swimming

Open Water Swimming is defined by FINA as any competition that takes place in rivers, lakes or oceans.

Long Distance Swimming includes events up to 10km. These events are non-escorted.

Marathon Swimming: events include distances over 10 km with an escort craft in events 25 km & over.

FINA events include championships for distances of 5 km, 10 km & 25 km, plus Marathon world Swimming Cup events of 10 km - 88 km.

The 2008 Olympic Games included Open Water Swimming for the first time with a 10 km event.

Open Water Swimming: Officials

Like pool swimming, there are many and varied officials required for a successful open water swimming event. These include:

- Referee and Assistant Referees
- Chief Timekeeper plus Timekeepers (digital watches with printout capacity)
- Chief Finish Judge plus Finish Judges
- Safety Officer
- Medical Officer
- Course Officer
- Clerk of Course
- Race Judges (25 km and over)
- Turn Judges
- Starter
- Announcer & Recorder

Many of these positions, due to the varied environment of OWS competition, carry out different roles to the conventional pool official. Some of the major differences for each of these positions are listed below.

Referee	<p>Full control & authority over all officials & conduct of the competition</p> <p>Over-riding responsibility is to ensure that a meet is conducted in accordance with FINA Rules and assuring swimmers fair competitive conditions</p> <p>At the start signal to swimmers, by raised flag and whistle blasts, that the start is imminent & when satisfied indicate by pointing the flag at the starter that the race may commence.</p>
Safety Officer	<p>Responsible to the Referee for all aspects of safety related to the conduct of the competition</p> <p>Start / Finish areas in particular to be free of any obstruction</p> <p>Ensure sufficient powered safety craft are available</p> <p>Provide swimmers with a course plan, tide & current charts + weather forecasts prior to the race</p> <p>Advise if course alterations are required due to weather conditions on the day</p>
Course Officer	<p>Responsible to the Organising Committee for the correct survey of the course (GPS preferred)</p> <p>Ensure start / finish areas are correctly marked</p> <p>Ensure all course alteration marks are correctly installed and manned prior to start of competition</p> <p>Inspect the course prior to the start with the Referee and Safety Officer.</p>
Clerk of Course	<p>Assemble & prepare competitors prior to the race</p> <p>Ensure each competitor is identified correctly with their race number & all swimmers have trimmed fingernails and are not wearing any jewellery, including watches.</p> <p>Keep swimmers & officials informed of time before start at suitable intervals until the last five minutes, when 1 minute warnings shall be given</p> <p>Be responsible for safety of competitors' clothing & equipment</p> <p>Ensure swimmers have water etc at the finish</p>

The Venue

The venue is a critical factor for the success of an Open water event. A detailed assessment and development of a plan for the venue should be coordinated prior to the event.

Some of the considerations for the venue include:

- Water shall be subject to only minor currents
- Health certificate certifying water quality
- Minimum depth - 1.40 m
- Minimum Temperature - 16 degrees C (60.8 degrees F)
- All turns and alterations of course shall be clearly marked and Turn Judge placed there.
- Clearly defined final approach to the finish and finish line.

A detailed example of an assessment of a venue can be found at Appendix B.

Race Rules

There is no doubt that OWS is very different to its pool counterpart. As a referee it is integral to the conduct of a meet that you have a sound knowledge of the rules. The Swimming Australia rules for OWS have been included here as Appendix A.

Risk Management

Safety is the paramount issue in the organisation and conduct of any open water swimming event

The first step in planning an open water swim is the consideration of safety factors. Organisations that can assist you in the smooth running of your open water swimming event include:

- The Red Cross
- Local boat, canoe, rowing & kayak clubs
- Local amateur radio organisations
- Local Life Saving Association
- Sea & Boy Scouts
- EMS Groups
- Local Hospital
- Police

- Local media
- Fire Service
- Coastguard
- Independent Rescue groups
- Local Harbourmaster

You should make a list of contact details of all assisting organisations prior to the event. This should be circulated to all relevant individuals involved with your meet.

Planning a safe well marked and patrolled open water swimming course

Some key components of planning a safe OWS course include:

- Start & Finish Areas must be highly visible from both land and water
- Competition Doctor is mandatory
- Escort craft personnel must be alert to symptoms of hypothermia, heat exhaustion and heatstroke
- Trained and competent escort craft personnel
- Communications network: two way radios with dedicated channel for Referee and Assistant Referees and shore control. Separate channels for other officials, safety personnel
- Mobile Phones if necessary, with a list of phone numbers
- Effective public address system
- Announcer with knowledge of OWS and who can give progressive race results, instructions and emergency announcements.

Checklist for Safety

- Do not allow late entries
- Conduct pre race briefing: course description, water temperature, surf/water conditions, pinpoint hazards and currents in detail
- Establish accurate head count of swimmers before the start, at the start and verify during the race and at the finish
- Instruct swimmers and escort personnel of the system to be used to notify race officials if a swimmer withdraws.

- Establish a cut off time where swimmers may be removed from the water (events up to 10 km - 30 minutes after the first finisher)
- Medical and first aid resources at the finish: massage, refreshments (sealed containers), hot water bottles, blankets etc.
- Ambulance on stand-by

THE RACE ORGANISERS AND OFFICIALS PRIMARY CONCERN IS FOR SAFETY AND THEY NEED TO BE PREPARED TO TAKE PROMPT DECISIVE ACTION DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

Appendix A

SAL OWS Rules

Appendix B

Assessment Tool - OWS



ASSESSMENT

Task:

You are required to be assessed as a Referee in a real / practical situation, by your assessor. This will give you the opportunity to provide evidence of your competence in a swimming specific environment (on the job). E.g.

- Protests
- Situations
- Electronic malfunctions
- Poor infraction reports
- Finish judges differing from Timekeepers
- Collapsed swimmer in the water
- Discrepancy between SAT time and AOE time
- Weather

SWIMMING AUSTRALIA

ASSESSMENT TOOL – UNIT 10 (OWS REFEREE)

Element / Performance Criteria NATIONAL STATE REGIONAL REFEREE (Circle One) OWS Assessment		Displayed Competency		NATIONAL LEVEL	Comments
		NO	YES		Must be completed if marked NO
1. Preparation					
1.1.	Arrived at venue two hours prior to the start to conduct the water temperature check in accordance with Rule OWS5.5 and had a full complement of equipment as required by the referee				
1.2.	Confirmed that all appointed officials were present but if not allocated replacement officials to tasks appropriate to their skills, training and the needs of the competition				
1.3.	Undertook a risk analysis of the competition area, checked the course to ensure alterations were clearly defined, feeding pontoons (where required) were positioned in accordance with the Rules				
1.4.	Explained all requirements to officials				
1.5.	Ensured that any official who was being trained was supported and assisted by an appropriate mentor.				
1.6.	Ensured the safety of swimmers, self and others throughout the event; ensured that sufficient functioning escort safety craft were present and meet with the required safety standards prior to start				
2. Performance of Task					
2.1.	Delivered pre race briefing to swimmers and covered all necessary matters.				
2.2.	Used signals and whistles appropriate to the meet and in accordance with the rules of open water swimming.				
2.3.	At the start of each event was positioned in a place where they could observe the start correctly and be easily seen and heard by the Starter				
2.4.	Monitored the race through the entirety of each event to ensure they were aware of what was happening in the water. Did not leave the water until the swimmer last to finish, finished or assigned this task to another referee.				
2.5.	Sought confirmation of the numbers of swimmers who started the race immediately after the start. Kept track of withdrawals and non finishers and confirmed numbers of finishers. Ensured that all swimmers who entered the race were accounted for at the end of the race.				
2.6.	Paid appropriate attention to climatic conditions, escort safety craft, and water conditions.				
2.7.	Aware of any possible infractions being reported.				
2.8.	Checked and signed off the result prior to any place announcements being made				
2.9.	Worked closely with the Meet Director to ensure the smooth and efficient conduct of the meet.				
2.10.	Worked closely with the Chief Recorder to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the meet.				
2.11.	When handling queries and information from Recorders questioned them appropriately displaying a positive attitude towards the recorder.				
2.12.	Used effective communication strategies to officiate the meet				
2.13.	Analyzed the performance of all other officials and undertook appropriate action to ensure that all were performing their tasks.				
2.14.	Provided constructive feedback to all officials in a concise, appropriate and timely manner.				
2.15.	Used appropriate and positive communication strategies when dealing with swimmers, officials, parents, supporters and coaches.				
2.16.	Focused entirely and exclusively on the task assigned without engaging in any distracting activities				

2.17.	Appeared to be in total control at all times.				
2.18.	Did the referee display a composed temperament at all times?				
2.19.	Set a good example for other officials; ensure that no smoking occurred in the field of play and that no alcohol consumed.				
2.20.	Were the correct signals given by the referee at the start of the competition?				
2.21.	Was willing to hand over to Assistant Referee when necessary and didn't try to maintain control even when this impacted the running of the meet.				
2.22.	Was not easily distracted.				
2.23.	Was not too rigid and uncomfortable in the position.				
2.24.	Did the referee have required flags and other equipment for identifying violations by swimmers and notification to swimmers?				
2.25.	Was correctly positioned for the finish and took placement of swimmers as they finished.				
3. Decision Making					
3.1.	All officials who made recommendations regarding possible breaches of the rules were questioned thoroughly to ensure that recommendation was being made in accordance with the rules.				
3.2.	All officials who made recommendations regarding possible breaches of the rules were questioned politely and shown appropriate courtesy.				
3.3.	All decisions made were consistent with every competitor being treated equally				
3.4.	All decisions were made quickly, clearly, concisely, in accordance with the rules. With out any procrastination.				
4. Infraction Reports					
4.1.	All infraction reports were completed accurately and pursuant to the rules				
4.2.	All written reports by other officials were checked for accuracy and, if inaccurate, were corrected or discarded.				
4.3.	Infraction reports were printed legibly				
5. Post Meet					
5.1.	Held race debrief with Officials and sought their input for areas of concern, improvement or identification of difficulties encountered. Where required, provided a report of the meet to the appropriate body				
5.2.	Where required, provided appropriate feedback to officials regarding the performance of their duties				
5.3.	Stayed available at the meet after the posting of the last results to hear any protests				
5.4.	Was there any evidence of discussing matters with other Referees or Starters? Did the Referee learn from the experience?				

Assessment Decision:

Competent Not Yet Competent

Date of Assessment:

Name of Assessor:

Assessor Signature:

Name of Candidate:

Candidate Comments:

Signature of Candidate:

SUMMARY COMMENT ON OVERALL PERFORMANCE	
Strengths of Candidate:	
Area (s) for further development:	