



TECHNICAL OFFICIALS EDUCATION PROGRAM

SWMTOFF02 UNIT 2 – STARTER

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 2 – Starter**, 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.

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:

SWMTOFF02

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 anything you don't understand.
- Observing others in a workplace.
- Practising 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 Starter.

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

The Learner Guide also includes a series of specifically designed learning **activities**, which will allow you to practice your new skills prior to assessment. ***These activities must be completed*** and will be represented by the logo below.



Activity

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.

SWMTOFF02 (UNIT 2): Starter

This unit outlines a range of general skills that are required by Starter officials. The elements within this unit are:

- Preparation
- Roles and Responsibilities of the Starter

Preparation

It is reasonably obvious as to why there is a need for the position of Starter in Swimming events. That's right, without a Starter there would be no race. As with all officiating positions in the sport of swimming, a key to operating successfully as a Starter, is that you are well prepared to carry out your duties.

Some of the steps that you will need to take in preparing for your role include:

- Report in to the Referee 60 minutes prior to the start of the meet and check with the Referee to see if there are any special requirements.
- Check the positioning of the starting platform, to ensure that you can clearly see all lanes.
- Check the starting equipment and make sure it is all there and working. This includes electronic starting devices, starting pistol, blank ammunition or caps, a whistle, the public address system and transducers to start the AOE. If handicap events are on the program, the Starter will also need to source a stopwatch, clipboard and pen.
- Check to see if the false start rope is in position and how to engage it.
- Ensure that the starting device & public address system (where applicable) can be seen and heard by all lanes & is appropriate for the conditions and swimmers, officials and spectators.



ACTIVITY 2.1

For each of the 5 preparatory steps listed above, list one possible negative consequence that may occur if they are not undertaken.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Starter

What the Rules Say:

In respect of the duties and powers of the Starter, The Swimming Rules of Swimming Australia Ltd. provide that:

SW2.3.1 The Starter shall have full control of the swimmers from the time the Referee turns the swimmers over to him (SW 2.1.5) until the race has commenced. The start shall be given in accordance with SW 4.

SW2.3.2 The Starter shall report a swimmer to the Referee for delaying the start, for wilfully disobeying an order or for any other misconduct taking place at the start, but only the Referee may disqualify a swimmer for such delay, wilful disobedience or misconduct.

SW2.3.3 The Starter shall have power to decide whether the start is fair, subject only to the decision of the Referee.

SW2.3.4 When starting an event, the Starter shall stand on the side of the pool within approximately five (5) metres of the starting edge of the pool where the Timekeepers can see and/or hear the starting signal and the swimmers can hear the signal.

The Start (Your Roles):

- When all Officials are in position and alerted, the Referee will signal the Starter with a stretched out arm to assume control of the competitors. The Starter will allow the competitor's time to settle down while they remain standing on the starting blocks.
- At the forward start, the competitor shall stand on the starting platform and remain there. At the Starter's command, "Take your Marks" the competitor must put at least one foot at the front edge of the starting platform. The position of the hands is irrelevant.
- Furthermore on the command "Take your marks", the competitors must immediately take up their starting position and hold steady. When all the competitors are steady, the Starting Signal will be given.
- If the starting signal sounds before a disqualification is declared, the race will continue and the competitors who have caused themselves to be disqualified will be informed on completion of the race.



ACTIVITY 2.2

What might be an example of an infraction that would cause a disqualification to occur prior to the starting signal being given?

- In **Backstroke events**, the Referee will instruct the competitors to enter the water before he/she hands over to the Starter. The competitors will line up in the water facing the starting end with hands on the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, if any, is prohibited. Competitors are not permitted to make any movement with any part of the body including release of the hands before the starting signal has been given.



ACTIVITY 2.3

Is it permitted for backstroke swimmers to start with their feet resting on the gutter?

Some Guidelines:

The principle objective of each and every Starter is to ensure that all Competitors achieve a fair start.

How To Apply Some Rules:

FINA RULE 2.3.2 - gives the Starter the ability to report a Swimmer to the Referee for any of the following:

- * *Delaying the start.*
- * *Wilfully disobeying an order.*
- * *For any other misconduct taking place at the start.*

However, only the Referee may disqualify a Swimmer for such delay, wilful disobedience, or misconduct, based upon these reports.

There may be a possibility of an “overlap” between each of the above listed conditions at the start. This may cause the Starter to be unsure as to which Infringement should be reported to the Referee.

You may use the following opinions with respect to the three above listed conditions:

1. **Delaying the start**, should be used when there is a flagrant delay, such as a competitor not ready to take up a position on the starting platform, on the Referees whistle, thereby delaying the start of the race and all other competitors. Another example may be a swimmer who dives into the pool before **ASSUMING** and **HOLDING HIS/HER STARTING POSITION** prior to the signal to start.
2. **Wilfully disobeying an order**, may occur if a competitor dives immediately into the pool, on the command, “take your marks”, without **ASSUMING** and **HOLDING HIS/HER STARTING POSITION**. A further example is that of a competitor who after being instructed to “stand up”, wilfully dives into the pool, after the order is given.
3. **For any other misconduct at the start**. An example may be a competitor who is very slow in taking up their set starting position at the start, after being instructed to “take their marks”.

Please be aware that it is the responsibility of the Starter to be definite in regards to the condition, which forms the basis of the report he/she presents to the Referee.

Should the report to the Referee, result in a disqualification being invoked; the Referee does not count the attempted start.

In the event of a Starter triggering a recall signal by mistake, the Starter must consider very carefully whether or not to submit a report to the Referee.



ACTIVITY 2.4

Can a Starter disqualify a swimmer for delay, wilful disobedience, or misconduct? What should the Starter do?

Rule SW 14 STATES THAT IF AN ERROR BY AN OFFICIAL FOLLOWS A FAULT BY A COMPETITOR, THE FAULT BY THE COMPETITOR MAY BE EXPUNGED.

In a situation such as this, the Starter is required to consider if any action by him/her has contributed in any way to the action by the Swimmer. Having given the matter careful consideration and deciding he/she has not in any way contributed to the false start, the Starter should then submit a report to the Referee.

Starting:

Should a false start occur and competitors be left at the “blocks”, the Starter shall immediately command these Competitors to “**stand up and stand down**”.

This command is given to protect the competitors remaining on the “blocks”. Should any of these Swimmers overbalance, reacting to the Starters command, the Starter shall advise the Referee that it was not an infringement of the Rule and no action is necessary.

Any Competitor who in the view of the Starter, **deliberately** enters the water **after** the Starter’s command to “stand up and stand down”, should be reported to the Referee for “**disobeying Starter’s instructions**”.

The initial Competitor(s) who entered the water shall be reported for “starting before the starting signal”. The Referee shall clear the pool and the start is then recommenced.

The situation may arise where there is general unsteadiness at the start, and there is an unreasonable delay after the command “take your marks. Here, the Starter is permitted, and will be encouraged, to advise the Competitors to “stand up”. The Starter shall then instruct the swimmers to maintain a stationary position, and once again issue the command “take your marks”.

Note: In this situation the Swimmers should not be told or permitted to “stand down”. Once again if a competitor overbalances reacting to the “stand up” command, (in reaction to the Starter’s words), then the Starter shall advise the Referee that it was not an infringement of the Rule and no further action is necessary. Any Swimmer who, in the opinion of the Starter, **deliberately** enters the water **after** the Starters command to “stand up” shall be reported for deliberately **disobeying Starter’s instructions**’.



ACTIVITY 2.5

What should happen in a situation where a Competitor is extremely slow in taking up a stationary position, after having been instructed to “take your marks”, and another Swimmer falls in?

Did you consider the following?

1. The other competitors should be ordered to “stand up and stand down”.
2. The Competitor who has entered the water shall be reported for “starting before the starting signal”.
3. The Starter should also consider the actions of the competitor, who was slow in going down, and whether or not these actions constituted ***misconduct*** with respect to the above mentioned definitions, and if so, that Swimmer (slow going down) shall also be reported for “***disobeying Starter’s instructions***”.
4. The start is then recommenced.

Malfunction of the Starter’s Pistol:

Should the Starting Device fail to function, the Starter will instruct the competitors to “Stand Up”. Should there be a second failure; the Starter then should use an alternative method.

Hearing Impaired Swimmers:

If a hearing impaired competitor is participating in an event, the Starter will ensure that some additional pre-arranged signal is used so that that competitor is not disadvantaged. There are a number of options. They include the Starter dropping one arm or a towel or an appointed Official tapping the competitor on an ankle, or a light activated by the starting device.



ACTIVITY 2.6

Have you ever needed to make specific arrangements as a Starter, to assist a hearing impaired, other athlete with a disability? If so, what was the situation, what did you do and was it effective?

Records:

In the event of a record being established, the Starter is required to sign a **Record Application Form** before he/she leaves the pool. However, if Automatic Officiating Equipment is used for the Swim, only the Referee is required to sign the Record Application Form.

Handicap Races (Delayed Start):

The Starter will stand behind Lane 1 and give the commands “Get Ready” and either “Go or Zero”. He/she will start the watch on the command “Go” or “Zero” and walk behind the blocks calling the seconds loud and clear “1, 2, 3, 4 etc.” **The Check Starter** will walk across the pool-deck behind the Starting Blocks with the Starter to ensure that no competitor leaves his block before his handicap time has been called.



ACTIVITY 2.7

As a Starter, what is your role in the event that a record has been broken and Automatic Officiating Equipment (AOE) has been used?



ASSESSMENT

Task 1:

You are required to answer the questions below. You are required to successfully answer ALL questions. If this does not occur on your first attempt, you will be given the opportunity to gain assistance from your assessor / mentor and then be re-assessed.

1. At what time before a swim meet commences should an Official Starter report, and to whom?
2. After reporting, list 5 duties of a Starter prior to commencement of the meet?
3. When does a Starter assume full control over the swimmers, and when does this control cease?

4. What additional duties, other than starting, may a Starter be required to perform?

5. What is the number of Starts allowed when starting a race?

6. In starting a race, the gun or the electronic starting equipment fails to activate. What procedure is adopted?

7. Detail the procedure involved in the event of a false start.

8. When a swimmer wilfully disobeys the Starter, causes obstruction or deliberately delays the start, what procedure is implemented?

10. In a handicap event, where is the Starter sited, and how is the race started?

11. In Backstroke, what is the starting position?

12. If a New Record is achieved, what are the Starters duties in that regard?

13. What procedure(s) may be adopted for deaf swimmers?

Task 2:

You are required to be assessed as a Starter, in a real / simulated 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).

ASSESSMENT TOOL – UNIT 2 (STARTER)

Element / Pool Deck Performance Criteria STARTER		Displayed Competency		Comments
		YES	NO	Must be completed if marked NO
1. Preparation				
1.1.	Arrived at venue at least 1 hour prior to commencement of event and reports to Referee			
1.2.	Positioned starting platform in a position where Starter can clearly see all lanes			
1.3.	Ensured that all equipment that is required for the task is available, appropriate, tested, working and positioned correctly			
1.4.	Ensured that the starting device & public address system (where applicable) could be seen and heard by all lanes & was appropriate for the conditions and swimmers, officials and spectators			
2. Performance of Task				
2.1.	Worked with the referee to maintain a position where the Referee can be seen during each start			
2.2.	Positioned where they could be seen by all officials who need to see.			
2.3.	Watched the Referee at all times prior to the handover so they could react to all instructions and signals			
2.4.	Reacted immediately and appropriately to the Referee's signals and instructions			
2.5.	Issued all instructions for the start after the Referee handed over control of the start			
2.6.	Issued the start instructions as soon as the starter was satisfied that all competitors were stationary			
2.7.	Swimmers were not held unduly after they were ready to start			
2.8.	All instructions were issued clearly and in accordance with the rules			
2.9.	Starting instructions were issued with the appropriate volume and tone of voice			
2.10.	Focused entirely and exclusively on the task assigned without engaging in any distracting activities			
3. Decision Making				
3.1.	All recommendations regarding possible breaches of the rules were made immediately to the Referee			
3.2.	All recommendations were consistent with every competitor being treated equally			
3.3.	All recommendations were made clearly, concisely and in accordance with the rules.			
4. Infraction Reports				
4.1.	All infraction reports were completed accurately and pursuant to the rules			
4.2.	All written reports were completed expediently after the verbal report.			
4.3.	Infraction reports were printed legibly			
5. Post Meet				
5.1.	Remained after the last race until advised by the Referee that they may leave			

Assessment Decision:

Competent Not Yet Competent

Name of Candidate: _____

Candidate's Mobile: _____

Candidate's Email: _____

Candidate's Club name: _____

Date of Assessment: _____

Name of Assessor: _____

Assessor Signature: _____

Future Training / Assessment Recommendations: