

This document explains the pathway that Swim Ireland have in place from the time that an athlete begins their competitive career until they reach National level competition.

All Swim Ireland competitions are open to all Swim Ireland registered members subject to relevant qualification criteria as applicable. At National Meets, specific qualification criteria are available for athletes with disabilities. Clubs and Regions should make reasonable adjustments to include athletes with disabilities at their meets.

In all cases, coaches should ensure athletes meet an adequate standard to enter any competition.

Ages:

Athletes ages will be defined as their age on 31st December of the year of the competition – e.g., an athlete born in 2012 will swim as a 12-year-old during 2024 and a 13-year-old during 2025. This applies to all competitions except for schools which will be defined as age on 31st August of the school year and Inter/Intra club GALAs who can use age on day if preferred.

Time Standards:

Qualifying Times: Where a meet has qualifying times, athletes who have achieved these times will be accepted into that event.

Consideration Times: Where a meet has consideration times, athletes who have achieved these times will be considered for entry into the event based on entry numbers.

Athletes who have not achieved either qualifying or consideration times will not be accepted into the event.

Upper Cut Off Times: Where a meet has upper cut of times, athletes must be SLOWER than the designated time to be accepted into the event.

Competition Types:

Swim Ireland’s Domestic Competition Pathway sets out the competitions to be held Regionally and Nationally throughout the year. These are classified and shown in the Competition Pathway diagram on page 2 and 3 as:

	Competition Type	Diagram Colour Code
	Regional & National Schools	
(a)	Intra-club GALA	
(b)	Inter-club GALA	
(c)	Club Invitational/Open MEET	
(d)	Skills Challenge (In-House)	
(e)	Regional Future Challenger Series and Regional Aspiring Champions Series	
(f)	Regional Championships	
(g)	National Meets and National Championships	

COMPETITION PATHWAY



Consideration Standards are not usually published for these competitions however entries may be restricted. Please refer to the Meet Conditions for full information.

Qualifying and Consideration Standards are published for these competitions. Please refer to the Meet Conditions for full information.

Regional Schools *
from 8/9 years

Inter club
(multiple clubs)
from 8 years

Future Challengers
10 - 14 years

Regional Short Course Championships
from 13 years

Irish Winter National Championships (25m)
from 13 years



Irish Schools *
from 8/9 years

Club Open Meet
(multiple clubs)
from 9 years

Aspiring Champions Series
from 13 years

Regional Age Group & Senior Championships
from 12 years

McCullagh International Meet
from 13 years



Irish Open Championships
from 13 years



The Irish Minor Schools has qualifying times that have to be achieved via the Regional Schools.



Swimmers do not need to be a Swim Ireland member to enter.



Only swimmers who do not qualify for the Irish Summer National Age Group Championships (50m) may compete in this event.

Regional Swim Festival
from 10 years

Irish Summer National Age Group Championships (50m)
12-14 years

Irish Summer National Youth & Senior Championships (50m)
15 years & over

DISABILITY PATHWAY

Disabled swimmers registered with a Swim Ireland club may enter these meets under the guidance of their coach. Clubs should notify the meet organisers of the athlete's disability.

Swimmers registered with a Swim Ireland club who are members of Paralympics Ireland, Deaf Sport Ireland, or the Irish Down Syndrome Association, are required to have a national classification to enter these competitions. Qualification standards will be established by Swim Ireland with support from relevant Governing Bodies

ATHLETE PROGRESSION



(a) Intra-Club GALAs:

INTRA club Galas take place within one club, with athletes competing amongst and against members of their own club

These GALAS are for athletes **aged from 7 upwards** (age on day or year of birth). These Galas are an introduction to competition and the emphasis should be on FUN. Athletes may receive a participation ribbon/certificate etc.

Qualification standard: None

(b) Inter-Club GALAs:

INTER club Galas take place for more than one club competing against each other

These GALAS are for athletes **aged from 8 upwards** (age on day or year of birth). These Galas are an introduction to competition and the emphasis should be on FUN. Athletes race for team points rather than personal awards, with an overall award presented to the Top Club or similar. Athletes may receive a participation ribbon/certificate etc.

Qualification standard: None

(c) Club Invitational/Open Meets:

Athletes **must be at least 9 years of age** to compete in these meets. Times achieved can be used to enter Regional and National Competitions subject to them meeting specific meet licence conditions and provided they are held within the qualification period for each respective meet and in the required pool format (SC or LC).

Qualification standard: Consideration Times are recommended to allow clubs to keep within their session time limits

(d) Skills Challenge (In-house)

Athletes must be aged 8 to 12 years in the year that the season starts i.e. in the 2024-2025 season, athletes born 2016 to 2012. These in-house assessments will provide feedback to young athletes and monitor progression in stroke efficiency, kick speed, underwater kick speed, turn speed and streamlining skills.

Qualification standard: None

(e) Future Challenger Series & Aspiring Champions Series: Athletes aged 13/14 years who have previously competed in the Aspiring Championships Series cannot enter the Future Challenger Series and athletes cannot enter both series in the same cycle (short course season and long course season).

Future Challenger Series:

Athletes **must be aged 10 to 14 years of age** to compete at these meets. There will be no qualifying times in place to enter and times achieved by athletes aged 12 years and over can be used to enter the Regional Age Group and Senior LC Championships provided they are held within the qualification period.

Qualification standard: None

Aspiring Champions Series:

Athletes **must be at least 13 years of age** to compete at these meets. Times achieved can be used to enter Regional and National Championship events provided they are held within the qualification period for each respective meet and in the required pool format (SC or LC).

Qualification standard: Consideration Times may be in place to support athlete development and manage meet timelines

(f) Regional Championships

Regional SC Championships:

Age Groups: Male and Female 13-16, 17/18, 19 & Over (for meet qualification purposes only)

Athletes **must be at least 13 years of age**. Short Course times or Long Course conversions achieved in any Level 3 licensed onshore or similarly licensed offshore meet can be used for entry. Qualifying or Consideration Times must have been achieved as per the meet conditions. One Open Final or “A” and “B” Open Finals ONLY (with the fastest qualifiers irrespective of age). Times achieved can be used to enter the Irish National Winter Championships (25m) and the McCullagh International Meet.

Qualification standard:

Qualifying and Consideration Times

Regional Age Group and Senior LC Championships:

Age Groups: 12, 13/14, 15/16, 17 & Over

Athletes **must be at least 12 years of age** to enter this meet. Long Course times or Short Course conversions achieved in any Level 3 licensed onshore or similarly licensed offshore meet can be used for entry. Qualifying or Consideration Times must have been achieved as per the meet conditions. Finals in each defined age group for all individual events except for 400m, 800m and 1500m events, which will be Heat Declared Winner events. Times achieved can be used to enter the Irish Summer National Age Group Championships and Irish Summer National Youth & Senior Championships.

Qualification standard:

Qualifying and Consideration Times

(g) National Championships

Irish National Winter Championships (25m):

Age Groups: Male and Female 13-16, 17/18, 19 & Over (for meet qualification purposes only)

Athletes **must be at least 13 years of age** to enter this meet. Short Course and Hytek converted Long Course times achieved in any Level 3 licensed onshore or similarly licensed offshore meet can be used for entry. Consideration Times must have been achieved as per the meet conditions. ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ finals according to the meet conditions in all events except for 800m and 1500m events, which will be Heat Declared Winner events.

Qualification standard:

Consideration Times

Irish Open Championships (50m):

Age Groups: 13-16, 17/18, 19 & Over (for meet qualification purposes only)

Athletes **must be at least 13 years of age** to enter this meet. **ONLY** Long Course Times achieved in any Level 3 licensed onshore or similarly licensed offshore meet can be used for entry. SC times or SC conversions **will NOT be accepted**. Consideration times must have been achieved as per the meet conditions. A range of Open and Junior (18 & under) finals will be offered according to the meet conditions.

Qualification standard:

Qualifying Times

Irish Summer National Age Group Championships (50m):

Age Groups: 12, 13, 14 years

Athletes **must be at least 12 years of age** to enter this meet. This meet will be held as a LC meet. Long Course Qualification and Consideration Times and Short Course Consideration Times achieved in any Level 3 licensed onshore or similarly licensed offshore meet can be used for entry. Qualifying times must have been achieved as per the meet conditions. "A" and "B" finals will be held in each defined age group in 50m, 100m and 200m events. "B" Finals will only take place in events where 21 or more athletes compete in the heats. Only "A" Finals will be run in the 400m events and 800m and 1500m events will be Heat Declared Winner events.

Qualification standard:

Qualifying & Consideration Times

Irish Summer National Youth & Senior Championships (50m):

Age Groups: Male 15, 16, 17/18, 19 & over: Female 15, 16/17, 18 & over

Athletes **must be at least 15 years of age** to enter this meet. This meet will be held as a LC meet. **ONLY** Long Course Qualification and Consideration Times achieved in any Level 3 licensed onshore or similarly licensed offshore meet can be used for entry. SC times or SC conversions **will NOT be accepted**. Qualifying times must have been achieved as per the meet conditions. "A" and "B" finals will be held in each defined age group in 50m, 100m and 200m events. "B" Finals will only take place in events where 21 or more athletes compete in the heats. Only "A" Finals will be run in the 400m events and 800m and 1500m events will be Heat Declared Winner events.

Qualification standard:

Qualifying & Consideration Times

A reminder that all athletes, coaches and team managers must agree to the Swim Ireland Code of Conduct and should always abide by this. Anyone who is in breach of the Code will be reprimanded. Officials are volunteers who give of their time freely and should always be treated with respect.

Clubs attending Offshore meets may nominate these for qualification for Irish National Meets. Approval must be sought from Swim Ireland in advance of traveling and Hy-tek results must be sent after the meet. Athletes registered with a Swim Ireland club who are resident primarily overseas DO NOT need to seek approval from Swim Ireland for such meets. However, they should send their results to their home club and be prepared to send copies of the results to Swim Ireland on request.

Please note that the information contained above is general information and should not be read as a standalone document. This document should be read in conjunction with the relevant season's Season Plan and associated Domestic Plan Notes. These two documents supersede any information found above.