National Centre FAQ

This FAQ provides an overview of entry requirements, expectations, fees and other key information for athletes considering a place in a Swim Ireland National Centre.

What are the entry requirements for a National Centre?
In general, athletes aged 18 and over who have achieved the National Programme standards can join their preferred Centre, subject to availability.
Beyond that, entry depends on the number of places available in the Centre. Coaches generally use 700 World Aquatics Points as a guide, but this does not guarantee a place and may vary each year depending on how many current athletes remain eligible.

What standard is expected of swimmers in a National Centre?
Most athletes in our National Centres are working towards qualification for the international meets held each summer. All Centre athletes are expected to show full commitment to that goal.

Can swimmers still be considered if they have not previously had access to a National Centre?
Yes. We recognise that some athletes may not have had previous access to a Centre, and this is not considered.

What fees apply to National Centres?
The current fee is €1,500 per season, paid as €125 per month from September to August. This covers pool and gym sessions.
Additional services in each Centre, such as physio and nutrition, as well as any overseas meets or camps, may involve extra costs.

Are personal qualities such as teamwork and work ethic considered?
Yes. Personal and athletic qualities, such as teamwork and work ethic, are considered alongside the entry requirements when offering a place.

Is there an interview process, and when does it take place?
Yes. National Centre coaches will arrange an interview with the athlete, and in some cases their home programme coach, before a place is offered.
In Limerick, interviews often take place around the same time as University Scholarship interviews for athletes applying for scholarships.

Do I need to remain a member of a Swim Ireland club?
Yes. All athletes in National Centres must remain members of a Swim Ireland club, and it is important to maintain a good relationship with that club.
An athlete's Swim Ireland club completes their annual Swim Ireland registration and manages their entries for domestic competitions.
Athletes should also note that any club fees must be paid to remain eligible as a National Centre athlete. Some clubs charge only the Swim Ireland membership and entry fees, while others also charge a club membership fee. Clubs do not charge a monthly training fee.

Do I need to be a UL student to join National Centre Limerick?
No. Athletes do not need to be UL students to train in NCL. However, some additional supports are available only to scholarship athletes.
Across all National Centres, athletes do not need to attend an associated university—or any university—to train in a Centre.

What options are available if I want to start university but do not meet the criteria for a National Centre?
If you plan to start university but do not yet meet the criteria for a National Centre, there are still opportunities to continue developing within a strong performance environment.
Several universities in Ireland have swimming programmes registered as Swim Ireland clubs.
You can find more information on these options below:
University of Limerick Swim Club
University of Galway Swim Club
UCD Swim Club