



Chapter 1.3 - IPC Classification Code: Model of Best Practice Eligible Impairment Assessment on the Basis of Medical Documentation

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International Paralympic Committee

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1 Introduction

This document has been developed as Model of Best Practice pursuant to the IPC Classification Code.

International Federations must ensure that all the Athletes competing in the Para-sport(s) under their governance have an Eligible Impairment. In this regard it is in all participants' interests to have the issue of whether an Athlete has an Eligible Impairment addressed at an early stage in the Classification process.

International Federations can ensure this happens through requiring Athletes to establish they have a Health Condition that can give rise to an Eligible Impairment, and/or demonstrate the existence of an Eligible Impairment. The simplest way for this to be done is to ask Athletes to provide Medical Diagnostic Information that relates to the relevant Health Condition and Eligible Impairment.

In some cases, where the Health Condition and/or the Eligible Impairment is obvious, it may not be necessary to submit Medical Diagnostic Information regarding either. There will, however, be many cases where a careful review of Medical Diagnostic Information ahead of Athlete Evaluation by a Classification Panel will be good practice. This Eligible Impairment assessment will prevent delays and complications that arise if it is not clear to a Classification Panel that an Athlete has an Eligible Impairment.

This document provides International Federations with a Model of Best Practice to determine whether an Athlete has a relevant Health Condition and/or an Eligible Impairment on the basis of Medical Diagnostic Information. International Federations will benefit from having such a process in place as part of an effective and efficient classification programme.

2 Definitions and Terms Used

Athlete: a person who wishes to compete in a Para-sport governed by an International Federation, who wishes to provide that International Federation with Medical Diagnostic Information to satisfy the IF that the Athlete has a Health Condition that can give rise to an Eligible Impairment and/or the existence of an Eligible Impairment.

Eligibility Assessment Committee: a group of experts appointed by the International Federation Head of Classification to review Medical Diagnostic Information. (To ensure consistency and reliability of decision making, an IF should consider appointing a 'standing' Eligibility Assessment Committee. The experts do not need to be classifiers, but require



expertise in the medical diagnostics related to the [most common] cases. Knowledge of the purpose of Paralympic classification and the methods used will be an asset).

Eligible Impairment: as defined in the [IPC Policy on Eligible Impairments in the Paralympic Movement](#) (IPC Handbook, Section 2, Chapter 3.13).

Head of Classification: the person identified by the relevant International Federation as being the Head of Classification for the relevant Para-sport as defined in the IPC Classification Code.

Health Condition: a general term for pathology, disease (acute or chronic), disorder, injury or trauma.

Medical Diagnostic Information: information provided by an Athlete that relates to a Health Condition and/or an Eligible Impairment.

Medical Diagnostic Information Reviewer: the person identified by the Head of Classification to manage the review of Medical Diagnostic Information provided by an Athlete in order to establish the existence of a Health Condition that can give rise to an Eligible Impairment and/or an Eligible Impairment.

National Body: the organization nominated to act on behalf of the Athlete in accordance with the relevant International Federation rules and regulations.



3 The Recommended Process

- 3.1 International Federations should consider which Health Conditions and/or Eligible Impairments that the submission of Medical Diagnostic Information will be of assistance in identifying. Some International Federations will require Medical Diagnostic Information for all Athletes; others may decide to identify certain categories. Examples include: cases with unknown medical history, complex health conditions, or cases with Health Conditions that are not listed as examples in the [IPC Policy on Eligible Impairments in the Paralympic Movement](#) (IPC Handbook, Section 2, Chapter 3.13).
- 3.2 International Federations are advised to specify that Medical Diagnostic Information must be provided by a National Body on behalf of any Athlete who is either going to be competing for the first time, or has previously been allocated Sport Class Not Eligible (NE). The allocation of Sport Class Not Eligible (NE) may have been on the basis that either (a) the Athlete did not have an Eligible Impairment and/or (b) in the International Federation's opinion the Athlete's Health Condition had changed.
- 3.3 The Medical Diagnostic Information should be made available by the National Body in advance of the Event at which the Athlete wishes to compete. The relevant International Federation should set applicable timelines hereto, which ensure sufficient time for the Medical Diagnostic Information to be provided to its Eligibility Assessment Committee: for the Eligibility Assessment Committee to conduct its assessment; to allow for any further information to be requested and provided; and for individual expert assessments to be considered collectively in order to arrive to a decision in time (this can be either at the moment of annual licensing or in a certain timeframe ahead of Athlete Evaluation).
- 3.4 The Head of Classification must identify a Classifier for each of its relevant Events to act as the Medical Diagnostic Information Reviewer. The Medical Diagnostic Information Reviewer will consult with the Head of Classification to agree which (if any) matters should be referred to the Eligibility Assessment Committee.
- 3.5 The Eligibility Assessment Committee is to be tasked by the relevant International Federation with assessing Medical Diagnostic Information and forming a conclusion as to whether the Medical Diagnostic Information establishes the presence of a Health Condition that can give rise to an Eligible Impairment and/or the existence of an Eligible Impairment.



- 3.6 The Eligibility Assessment Committee should ideally be comprised of the Head of Classification and at least two other experts with appropriate medical qualifications. The members of the Eligibility Assessment Committee should be consulted individually. If the Head of Classification is not a medically qualified Classifier, and/or believes that he/she does not hold the necessary competencies to assess the case, he/she should not participate in the assessment, but assist the Eligibility Assessment Committee.
- 3.7 All members of the Eligibility Assessment Committee should sign appropriate confidentiality undertakings.
- 3.8 Wherever possible the Medical Diagnostic Information should be shared in redacted format (that is all reference to the individual Athlete and the source of the Medical Diagnostic Information should be withheld from the Eligibility Assessment Committee).
- 3.9 Each member of the Eligibility Assessment Committee will review all incoming assessments individually and provide a response/decision to the IF Head of Classification. If so required, any Committee member may request additional information. Upon receipt, such information will be made available to all Committee members.
- 3.10 If the presence of a Health Condition that can give rise to an Eligible Impairment and/or the existence of an Eligible Impairment is confirmed by all members of the Eligibility Assessment Committee, the Athlete will be permitted to complete Athlete Evaluation with a Classification Panel at the next relevant Event. The Head of Classification should inform the Chief Classifier for that Event of the outcome of the Eligibility Assessment Committee review.
- 3.11 If one or more of the members of the Eligibility Assessment Committee is not satisfied that the Athlete has a Health Condition that can give rise to an Eligible Impairment and/or an Eligible Impairment, the Head of Classification will review the matter and make a final decision as to whether or not the Athlete has a Health Condition that can give rise to an Eligible Impairment or an Eligible Impairment. The Head of Classification may share the individual views of the members of the Eligibility Assessment Committee with each other in order to finalise this decision.
- 3.12 If the Head of Classification is not satisfied that an Athlete has a Health Condition that can give rise to an Eligible Impairment and/or an Eligible Impairment the Head of Classification will designate the Athlete with Sport Class Not Eligible. The decision must be explained clearly in writing to the relevant National Body.



- 3.13 The National Body must be provided the opportunity to comment on the decision and if it so chooses provide further Medical Diagnostic Information to the Eligibility Assessment Committee for review. If the decision is subsequently revised, the Head of Classification will inform the National Body.
- 3.14 If the decision is not changed, the Head of Classification will issue a final decision letter.

4 Considerations

- 4.1 In all cases, the onus is on the National Body to provide sufficient Medical Diagnostic Information to determine whether an Athlete has a Health Condition that can give rise to an Eligible Impairment and/or an Eligible Impairment.
- 4.2 The IF has the right to refuse the submission of the Health Condition that can give rise to an Eligible Impairment and/or an Eligible Impairment if it is submitted too late for the IF to reasonably conclude Eligible Impairment assessment.