

## **ATHLETE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CRITERIA**

### **September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, to August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026**

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

The Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) is a program of the Federal Government administered by Sport Canada. It is more commonly referred to as the Carding Program. The Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) is aimed at enhancing the Canadian high-performance sport system. The AAP assists international calibre athletes with their training and competition needs, through the provision of a living and training allowance and, where applicable, tuition expenses. The AAP is also intended to assist carded athletes in dealing with the increasing demands of high-performance sport and to enhance their personal and career development both during, and following, their athletic careers.

The carding cycle for 2025-2026 shall be September 1st, 2025, to August 31st, 2026.

\*This document is subject to change due to changes to the international event calendar.

#### **2. ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible for carding nomination, an athlete must meet Sport Canada's AAP's athlete eligibility requirements ([2.3 Athlete Eligibility Requirements of the AAP Policies & Procedures](#)), and:

- a) must be a registered member in good standing of a provincial branch of Canada Artistic Swimming throughout the carding cycle and;
- b) must have paid all outstanding fees to Canada Artistic Swimming prior to the start of the carding cycle and;
- c) must not be under suspension or other sanction for any doping or doping-related offense and;
- d) must have signed a 2025 and a 2026 Canada Artistic Swimming Athlete Agreement; and
- e) must meet the criteria set out in this document.

Athletes who are absent due to illness or injury at the time of the Sport Canada carding nomination will follow the process outlined in Section 11 of this document.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

“AAP” refers to Sport Canada’s Athlete Assistance Program

“CAS” refers to Canada Artistic Swimming

“CSO” refers to Canada Artistic Swimming’s Chief Sport Officer

“2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group” refers to a group of athletes that will train full-time in a training location in preparation for the current competitive season.

“2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group Ranking” refers to the 2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group ranking following the completion of the 2025-2026 Senior National Team Evaluations.

### 4. SWIMMERS ATTENDING A FOREIGN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Sport Canada policy states that athletes who are receiving an athletic scholarship are not eligible to receive AAP support in the months in which they are attending the foreign post-secondary educational institution.

As per Sport Canada policy (2.5.2), Canada Artistic Swimming will nominate swimmers who are attending a foreign post-secondary educational institution and are receiving an athletic scholarship for AAP funding provided that they commit to support the National Team Program activities.

These swimmers will be nominated by Canada Artistic Swimming for AAP support during the months they are not attending the foreign post-secondary institution. It is the responsibility of the individual athlete to notify Canada Artistic Swimming of the applicable time period for which they will not be attending the foreign post-secondary educational institution.

It is the responsibility of the NCAA-based athlete to notify their institution's compliance department to confirm that they are eligible to receive AAP support. It is also a NCAA-based athlete’s responsibility to determine any procedures that they must follow in order to meet the requirements of the institution’s compliance department.

## **5. AUTHORITY FOR CARDING DECISIONS**

All matters relating to the nomination of athletes for the AAP are the sole authority of Canada Artistic Swimming. The Chief Sport Officer will apply the process and criteria contained within this document to nominate athletes for carding to Sport Canada.

If an athlete does not meet (in the discretion and opinion of Canada Artistic Swimming) any of the criteria or requirements set out in the Canada Artistic Swimming AAP Criteria, Canada Artistic Swimming may decide, in its sole discretion, to either recommend withdrawal of carding, or to not nominate an athlete for 2025-2026.

If an athlete should wish to appeal a nomination or non-nomination, please refer to the [CAS Appeals Policy](#) for the process.

## **6. ALLOCATION OF CARDS**

Canada Artistic Swimming's current allocation is equivalent to 15 Senior cards.

Sport Canada reviews its carding allocations; therefore, this number is subject to change.

The breakdown of these funds into Senior National Cards and Development Cards is at the sole discretion of Canada Artistic Swimming.

Per Sport Canada policy, an athlete may not be nominated for less than four months of carding.

## **7. THE CARDING PROCESS**

Following the selection of athletes to the 2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group, Canada Artistic Swimming will nominate athletes to Sport Canada for the 2025- 2026 Carding Cycle, subject to the availability of cards.

All athletes being nominated must complete and submit all required documentation by the specified deadline in their carding notification letter. Funding will not be activated until such time that all required documentation has been submitted.

## 8. PRIORITIZATION OF CARDING NOMINATIONS

PRIORITY 1: **Senior International Card nominations (SR1/SR2)** based on [Sport Canada's AAP Policies and Procedures](#), Section 5.2.1 International Senior Cards

PRIORITY 2: **Senior National Team (SR)** Card nominations based on criteria outlined in this document.

PRIORITY 3: **Senior Health Related Circumstances Card** athletes who have health-related circumstances\* AND who meet the Sport Canada policy on Failure to Meet Renewal Criteria for Health-Related Reasons. [Section 9.1.3](#). There will be a maximum of 1 Health Related Card. Where there is a tie in current ranking, last year's ranking will be used to break the tie.

PRIORITY 4: **Development Cards (D)** based on criteria outlined in this document.

PRIORITY 5: **Remaining Senior Health Related Circumstanced Card** athletes that have not already received a health-related card and who meet the criteria as per Priority 3.

PRIORITY 6: **Development Health Related Circumstances Card** athletes who have health-related circumstances\* AND who meet the Sport Canada policy on Failure to Meet Renewal Criteria for Health-Related Reasons - [Section 9.1.3](#).

## 9. CARDING CRITERIA

### Senior International Criteria (SR1/SR2)

Sport Canada establishes the international criteria used to award Senior International Cards (SR1/SR2). These criteria are based on international performance at Olympic Games, in an Olympic year or World Aquatics Championships in Olympic events, in a non-Olympic Year. Sport Canada reserves the right to review and revise these criteria with appropriate notice.

Athletes who meet the Senior International criteria are eligible to be nominated for two consecutive years, with the card for the first year referred to as SR1 and the card for the second year referred to as SR2.

Senior International cards will be nominated based on the following criteria:

1. Athletes who represented Canada and placed in the top 8 and top ½ of the field at the 2025 World Championships and who are members of and are training in the training location with the 2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group.

The availability of Senior Cards is subject to the total number of cards available under the Sport Canada card quota.

## Senior National Criteria (SR)

Senior national cards will be nominated based on the following criteria:

1. Athletes who represented Canada at the 2025 World Championships who are members of and are training in the training location with the 2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group.
  - a. An athlete's ranking in the "2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group Ranking" will determine the ranked order in which athletes will be nominated.
2. Athletes who competed for Canada in 2025 World Aquatics Artistic Swimming World Cup Events and who are members of and are training in the training location with the 2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group.
  - a. An athlete's ranking in the "2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group Ranking" will determine the ranked order in which athletes will be nominated.

The availability of Senior Cards is subject to the total number of cards available under the Sport Canada card quota.

## Development Cards

Development cards are intended to support the development needs of athletes earlier in their career who clearly demonstrate the potential to achieve the Senior International Criteria in the future.

A minimum of four months of carding support must be available to nominate an athlete for a Development Card.

Athletes previously carded at the Senior (International or National) level for more than two years are not eligible for Development Cards.

Developmental Cards will be nominated in the following priority order based on the following criteria subject to the availability of cards.

1. Athletes selected to the 2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group will be nominated for carding from September 2025 to August 2026
  - An athlete's ranking in the 2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group Ranking will determine the ranked order in which athletes will be nominated.

The availability of Development Cards is subject to the total number of cards available under the Sport Canada card quota and the number of cards awarded in the Senior National Card category.

## Past Olympian

An athlete who has represented Canada in Artistic Swimming at the Olympics in the past, may be nominated for SR carding if they demonstrate the following criteria :

- There is rationale, based on data from training and/or competitions, that the athlete can be part of a top 6 team in Artistic Swimming at the upcoming World Championships or Olympics (i.e. within 1-5 years);
- The athlete has committed to a training plan designed in collaboration with a National Coaches;
- A commitment to international competition in the upcoming season, and
- The athlete has been selected as a member of the 2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group

Returning athletes will be ranked at the end of all SR card nominations for the given carding cycle.

## 10. CANADA ARTISTIC SWIMMING CARDED ATHLETE REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive and maintain their AAP support, carded athletes who are a member of and training with the 2025-2026 Senior National Team Training Group must:

- Be training in the full-time training environment and meet the performance standards communicated by Canada Artistic Swimming and;
- Participate in all scheduled activities and;
- Follow year-round prescribed training programs that are provided to the athlete by Canada Artistic Swimming and;
- Perform individual assessment protocols prescribed by the program established by the Canada Artistic Swimming.
- Athletes not participating in the above for Health-Related Circumstances must follow their return to sport plan as communicated by the CSO. If a carded athlete does not submit a training or assessment report by the communicated scheduled deadline, and the NSO wishes to recommend withdrawal of carded status for an alleged failure to meet agreed upon training and competitive commitments, the procedure will be as follows:



1. 1st missed deadline - Provide a written warning to the athlete, including the steps and timelines (48 hours) to remedy the situation and the consequences of a failure to heed the warning;
2. Missed deadline of Step 1 - Provide a written notification advising the athlete that they have not complied with the requirements necessary in order to retain their carding status and that Sport Canada will be notified within 48 hours.
3. Missed deadline of Step 2 - The Chief Sport Officer will notify Sport Canada of their non-compliance and recommend the withdrawal of the athlete's carding and will not be considered for further Canada Artistic Swimming National Program activities.
4. Pending the resolution of an appeal, Sport Canada will continue to provide the athlete with AAP Living and Training Allowances for two months after the NSO's initial notification recommending withdrawal of the athlete's carded status."

## **11. FAILURE TO MEET RENEWAL CRITERIA FOR HEALTH-RELATED REASONS - HEALTH-RELATED CIRCUMSTANCE**

Canada Artistic Swimming will consider nominating an athlete for carding if they have failed to meet the carding criteria for health-related reasons in accordance with section 9.1.3 of the Sport Canada AAP Policies, Procedures & Guidelines and they are unable to submit a challenge to the trials process by December 31, 2025 due the same health-related reason.

- 11.1** In order to be considered for nomination for carding based on health-related circumstances for 2025-2026, all the following requirements must be met:
- The athlete must have been carded during the 2024-2025 carding cycle.
  - The athlete must submit the appropriate documentation from their health practitioner outlining the issue and the expected date they will return to sport prior to the conclusion of the 2025 National Team Selection Process.
- 11.2** If CAS nominates an athlete for carding based on health-related circumstances:
- The athlete will be nominated for a card at the same level (i.e. Senior or Development) at which they were carded in 2024-2025.
  - The athlete may only be nominated for carding for health-related reasons for 1 season. (consistent with their carding from the past season)



**11.3** An athlete who has had carding based on health-related circumstances:

1. Must follow the conditions outlined in the Sport Canada AAP policy (sections 9.1.1 and 9.1.2) regarding curtailment of training and competition for health-related circumstances.
2. Must report as directed to Canada Artistic Swimming's Chief Sport Officer on their rehabilitation activity and progression.
3. If the swimmer is a full-time National Team athlete, reporting of health-related circumstances must be completed through the respective CAS Staff and designated medical staff, and documented in writing to the Chief Sport Officer for CAS.
4. Failure to report as directed may result in a recommendation to Sport Canada to withdraw carding at the sole discretion of CAS's Chief Sport Officer

It is the responsibility of the athlete to have duly notified CAS by reporting any health-related issues that significantly affected their ability to train at full capacity at any point in the carding cycle (September 2025 – August 2026)