

ATHLETE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CRITERIA September 1st, 2026, to October 31st, 2027

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 2026-2027 shall be September 1st, 2026, to October 31st, 2027.

*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;
- b) must have paid all outstanding fees to Canada Artistic Swimming prior to the start of the carding cycle;
- c) must not be under suspension or other sanction for any doping or doping-related offence;
- d) must have signed a 2026 and 2027 Canada Artistic Swimming Athlete Agreement; and
- e) must meet the criteria set out in this document.

Athletes who are absent due to health related circumstances 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

"COO" refers to Canada Artistic Swimming's Chief Operations Officer

"2026-2027 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.

"2026-2027 Senior National Team Training Group Ranking" refers to the 2026-2027 Senior National Team Training Group ranking following the completion of the 2026-2027 Senior National Team Evaluations.

4. ATHLETES ATTENDING A FOREIGN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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

As per Sport Canada policy (2.5.2), Canada Artistic Swimming may nominate athletes who are attending a foreign post-secondary educational institution and are receiving an athletic scholarship for AAP funding for the months in which they are not attending the institution, provided that they commit to support the National Team Program activities.

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;
- to notify the compliance department of their foreign-post-secondary educational institution to confirm that they are eligible to receive AAP support; and
- to determine any procedures that they must follow in order to meet the requirements of their 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 Operations Officer will apply the process and criteria contained within this document to nominate athletes for carding to Sport Canada.

If, in the opinion of Canada Artistic Swimming, an athlete does not meet one or more of the criteria or requirements set out in the Canada Artistic Swimming AAP Criteria, Canada Artistic Swimming may decide, in its sole discretion, either to recommend withdrawal of carding, or not to nominate the athlete for 2026-2027.

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

6. ALLOCATION OF CARDS

Sport Canada reviews and determines its carding allocations. As of December 2025, Canada Artistic Swimming's current allocation is equivalent to 15 Senior cards; however, 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 fewer than four months of carding.

7. THE CARDING PROCESS

After the selection of athletes to the 2026-2027 Senior National Team Training Group, Canada Artistic Swimming will nominate athletes to Sport Canada for the 2026-2027 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 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). In Olympic years, these criteria are based on international performance at Olympic Games; in non-Olympic years, they are based on performance at World Aquatics Championships in Olympic events. 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 Senior World Aquatics Championships or Olympic Games and who are members of and are training in the training location with the 2026-2027 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. With no Senior World Championships or Olympic Games in the 2026-2027 carding cycle, there are no opportunities for athletes to meet SR1 criteria.

Senior National Criteria (SR)

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

1. Athletes who represented Canada at the 2026 World Cup Super Final who are members of and are training in the training location with the 2026-2027 Senior National Team Training Group.
 - a. An athlete's ranking in the "2026-2027 Senior National Team Training Group Ranking" will determine the ranked order in which athletes will be nominated.
2. Athletes who competed for Canada in 2026 World Aquatics Artistic Swimming World Cup events and who are members of and are training in the training location with the 2026-2027 Senior National Team Training Group.
 - a. An athlete's ranking in the "2026-2027 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.

Development 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 2026-2027 Senior National Team Training Group will be nominated for carding from September 2026 to October 2027.
 - An athlete's ranking in the 2026-2027 Senior National Team Training Group Ranking will determine the ranked order in which athletes will be nominated.
2. Next Gen athletes who competed at the 2026 Junior World Championships and have been identified by Canada Artistic Swimming as potential Junior National Team members for the 2026-2027 season may be nominated for carding if funds allow.
 - Based on an athlete's ranking from the 2026 Junior Development Camp evaluations.

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 / Past National Team Member

An athlete who has represented Canada in Artistic Swimming at the Olympics or in a World Cup, World Championships or Pan Am Games 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 8 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 Coach;
- The athlete has made a commitment in writing (in any form that may be required by Canada Artistic Swimming) to international competition in the upcoming season; and
- The athlete has been selected as a member of the 2026-2027 Senior National Team Training Group

Returning athletes will be ranked at the end of SR card nominations, ahead of any health related circumstances cards, for the given carding cycle.

10. CANADA ARTISTIC SWIMMING CARDED ATHLETE REQUIREMENTS

Carded athletes who are members of and training with the 2026-2027 Senior National Team Training Group must meet all of the following requirements to receive and maintain their AAP support:

- Be training in the full-time training environment or, in case of Development Cards for Next-Gen athletes, commit in writing, in any form that may be required by CAS, to attend 4 camps per year;
- Meet the performance standards communicated by Canada Artistic Swimming;
- Participate in all scheduled activities (including training camps they have committed to attend);
- 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 2026-2027 Senior National Team Training Group for Health-Related Circumstances must follow their return to sport plan as communicated by the COO. 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 Operations 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, 2026 due the same health-related reason.

- 11.1 In order to be considered for nomination for carding based on health-related circumstances for 2026-2027, all the following requirements must be met:
 - The athlete must have been carded during the 2025-2026 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 2026 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 2025-2026.
 - The athlete may only be nominated for carding for health-related reasons for one season (consistent with their carding from the previous season).
- 11.3 If an athlete receives carding based on health-related circumstances:
 1. The athlete 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. The athlete must report as directed to Canada Artistic Swimming's Chief Operations Officer on their rehabilitation activity and progression.
 3. If the athlete 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 Operations 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 Operations Officer.

It is the responsibility of the athlete to promptly notify CAS by reporting any health-related issues that significantly affect their ability to train at full capacity at any point in the carding cycle (September 2026 – October 2027).