



# **Equestrian Australia Athlete Classification Policy**

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# Preface

Athlete Classification is a defining feature of Para-sport, which forms the competitive structure of Para-Sport competition from entry level competition through to the Paralympic Games. The International Paralympic Committee (**IPC**) Athlete Classification Code and International Standards (collectively referred to as the "**IPC Code**") is the fundamental document on which classification in the Paralympic movement is based.

In accordance with the IPC Code, classification in Para-sport:

1. defines who is eligible to compete in Para-sport; and
2. groups athletes into sport classes according to how much their impairment affects fundamental activities in each specific sport or discipline.

The classification processes of each Para-sport share common features. However, the classification process is sport-specific.

A list of definitions and abbreviations is provided at the end of this policy.

## 1. Policy Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the Equestrian Australia Athlete Classification Policy (Classification Policy) is to:

- Provide a clear statement on the purpose of Classification in Para Equestrian;
- Set out the position, role and responsibilities of Equestrian Australia with regards to classification, as the member of the Fédération Équestre Internationale and in accordance with the IPC Code, the IPC Model of Best Practice for National Classification and Paralympics Australia Athlete Classification Policy;
- Set out the requirements of Equestrian Australia's members and other organisations and individuals engaged by Equestrian Australia for classification purposes;
- Promote and uphold the integrity of Paralympic sport.

- 1.2 This document shall be read in conjunction with the IPC Code, IPC Code of Ethics, PA Classification Policy and International Standards and any other relevant Equestrian Australia Policy.
- 1.3 In the event that this policy fails to provide for a matter covered by a provision in the IPC Code, the provision appearing in the IPC Code shall apply and be regarded as being part of this Classification Policy.

## 2. Who does this Policy apply to?

- 2.1 This policy applies to:
  - Equestrian Australia employees, contractors and volunteers
  - Selected Athletes and Appointed Officials of Equestrian Australia Teams
  - Equestrian Australia Member and state organisations, the PA members and state organisations, Equestrian Australia athletes and athlete support personnel
  - Any other organisations or individuals engaged by Equestrian Australia for Classification purposes.
- 2.2 Equestrian Australia will only recognise classification activities that are conducted within the scope of this Classification Policy. This Classification Policy does not apply to events offered by Equestrian Australia to athletes with impairments that sit outside of the IPC Code or the Fédération Équestre Internationale Classification rules.

## 3. Paralympic Classification Governance

- 3.1 The IPC is the global governing body of the Paralympic movement, responsible for the IPC Code, models of best practice and monitoring the IPC Code compliance of its members.
- 3.2 Paralympics Australia (**PA**) is the National Paralympic Committee (**NPC**) for Australia and the NPC member of the IPC. PA is required, as a condition of its membership of the IPC, to comply with the IPC Code and to ensure that national classification rules conform with the IPC Code.
- 3.3 Fédération Équestre Internationale (**FEI**) as a member of the IPC is required to comply with the IPC Code and to recommend that its national bodies comply with the applicable provisions of the Code.

3.4 The FEI is responsible for the development and implementation of classification systems in Para Equestrian including:

- Selecting the IPC eligible impairments that are included in its sport;
- Setting processes and procedures for assessing whether an Athlete has an Eligible Impairment;
- Setting Minimum Impairment Criteria for each Eligible Impairment;
- Determining Sport Classes based on the extent to which Athletes are able to execute the specific tasks and activities fundamental to Para Equestrian;
- Setting relevant procedures for International Level Classification Personnel and Training;
- Defining processes for the management of International Level Protests and Appeals;
- Outlining IF related Data Protection procedures;
- Managing international level investigations, of alleged misconduct and allegations of Intentional Misrepresentation.

3.5 Equestrian Australia as a condition of its membership of PA is required to:

- Abide by the PA Athlete Classification Policy and promote its adoption through its network, to support classification governance and compliance with the IPC Code;
- Take such actions and provide all reasonable support and assistance as PA requires in order to comply with its obligations under the IPC Code, and to support integrity in classification.

3.6 The delivery of classification services for Para Equestrian in Australia is the responsibility of Equestrian Australia unless otherwise agreed by the FEI, PA, Equestrian Australia, and the Australian Sports Commission.

## 4. Classification Integrity and Safeguards

4.1 Equestrian Australia adopts an inclusive approach and equally recognises Para Equestrian within its structure, systems, people and pathways.

4.2 Participation in Para Equestrian should be safe and inclusive for all. Equestrian Australia is committed to ensuring that all people in Para Equestrian, and more specifically in classification, are treated with respect and dignity and are protected

from bullying, discrimination, harassment, abuse or physical or psychological injury.

- 4.3 Classification is an athlete-centred process and is to be conducted by all involved parties in a manner that protects and supports each Athlete's physical and psychological wellbeing.
- 4.4 Classification works best when Athletes, Athlete Support Personnel and Classification Personnel work cooperatively towards a common outcome of determining the most accurate Sports Class for all athletes.
- 4.5 Equestrian Australia is committed to an Australian classification system that is safe, supportive and friendly for children and young people. Equestrian Australia adopts state and territory child protection legislation (including mandatory reporting obligations) and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in its classification policies and procedures.
- 4.6 Athletes have the right, and are encouraged, to choose one person to support and accompany them through any classification process (**Athlete representative**). If the Athlete is under 18 years or has a legally appointed guardian this is mandatory. If the Athlete requires an interpreter (e.g. language other than English or Auslan), the interpreter will be permitted to accompany the Athlete in addition to the Athlete representative.
- 4.7 As with the delivery of any sport operation, classification carries with it an inherent level of risk. Equestrian Australia is committed to a national classification system that proactively identifies, assesses and minimises risks that could negatively impact the Equestrian Australia classification strategy, reputation, compliance, finances and/or people.
- 4.8 Intentional Misrepresentation
  - 4.8.1 Intentional Misrepresentation (**IM**) is a deliberate attempt by an Athlete or Athlete Support Personnel (either by deed or omission) to mislead a Paraspport organization or anyone else regarding the existence or extent of the Athlete's skills and/or the nature of their eligible impairment. Intentional Misrepresentation may occur prior to or during Athlete Evaluation and/or at any point after the allocation of Sport Class.
  - 4.8.2 IM includes circumstances where an Athlete or Athlete support person:
    - submits false and/or fraudulent medical diagnostic information as a part of the classification process, or withholds relevant medical documentation that may have an impact on the classification process;

- attempts to deceive the classification panel during Athlete evaluation by misrepresenting the Athlete's skills and/or abilities and/or the degree or nature of impairment;
- deliberately presents at Athlete evaluation in a way that is inconsistent with their usual presentation in competition;
- fails to make a medical notification as to a change in circumstances that may impact upon sport class allocation;
- knowingly assists, covers up, is involved in any type of complicity involving IM or disrupts the Athlete evaluation process with the intention of deceiving or misleading the classification panel.

4.8.3 Athletes and/or Athlete support personnel may be subject to disciplinary actions if found guilty of IM offenses under the IPC Code, IF classification rules, PA Classification Policy, Equestrian Australia classification rules and/or the Equestrian Australia Competition Manipulation and Sports Wagering Policy. Investigations and any subsequent disciplinary and reporting procedures follow the PA Classification Standard: Intentional Misrepresentation.

4.8.4 Any sanctions that are applied to Athletes or Athlete Support Personnel in relation to IM by the IPC, FEI or PA are recognized by Equestrian Australia across all levels of Para Equestrian.

## 5. PA Roles and Responsibilities

PA is expected to:

- 5.1 Lead Australia with integrity and represent national classification interests to the IPC, IFs and Oceania Paralympic Committee;
- 5.2 Collaborate with other NPCs in the best interests of the development of global classification strategy;
- 5.3 Develop and support the implementation of an inclusive national classification system in accordance with the IPC Code. PA is expected to modify the specifications in the IPC Code where these are not practical in an Australian sporting environment;
- 5.4 Develop policy for and provide support to Equestrian Australia to comply with the IPC Code;

- 5.5 Monitor compliance, and address non-compliance, of its members with the PA Athlete Classification Policy;
- 5.6 Develop policies and procedures with respect to classification for Selected Athletes and Appointed Officials of Paralympic Teams;
- 5.7 Develop generic classification resources and education to support its members in the delivery of any classification systems;
- 5.8 Cooperate with any classification investigations initiated by the IPC or any IF; and
- 5.9 Initiate classification investigations based on sound evidence and support its Members with the management of such processes.

## 6. Equestrian Australia Roles and Responsibilities

Classification is integral to the delivery of Para Equestrian competition. Equestrian Australia will conform with FEI Classification Rules as much as is practical. Equestrian Australia adopts an inclusive approach and adheres to its roles and responsibilities in Para Equestrian classification by way of:

### 6.1 Governance

- 6.1.1 Recognising PA in its role of leading the strategic objectives and national governance of Classification for Para-sports in Australia;
- 6.1.2 Developing and implementing Equestrian Australia specific Classification Rules, an athlete classification pathway, other classification policies and procedures relevant to Para Equestrian that align with PA Athlete Classification Policy;
- 6.1.3 Clearly outlining the expectations of Equestrian Australia members, athletes, athlete support personnel, classification personnel and any other persons or organisations engaged by Equestrian Australia;
- 6.1.4 Report on Equestrian Australia classification program activities and acquit any funding provided by PA on request; and
- 6.1.5 Consider risks associated with Classification within the Equestrian Australia risk management framework.

### 6.2 Classification System

- 6.2.1 Implementing, as closely as possible, the classification system that is defined by the FEI, including the adoption of:



- The eligible impairments permitted to compete in Para Equestrian;
- The processes and procedures for assessing whether an Athlete has an eligible impairment (Eligibility Assessment);
- The Minimum Impairment Criteria and assessment methods;
- The Sport Classes and Sport Class Status; and
- The Athlete Evaluation processes and assessment methods.

### 6.3 Delivery of Classification Opportunities

6.3.1 Establishing a classification pathway that is appropriate to the standard of competition at which an Athlete competes and deliver classification opportunities accordingly.

### 6.4 Classification Personnel, Training and Support

6.4.1 Appointing a number of key Classification Personnel, including but not limited to classification administrators and classifiers, in accordance with the PA Classification Standard: Classification Personnel and Training. Classification Personnel have a key role in the organisation, administration and delivery of Classification for Equestrian Australia and their members,

6.4.2 Establishing and delivering a transparent system for the recruitment, education, training, certification and re-certification of Para Equestrian Classifiers.

6.4.3 Classifiers are recognised as part of the Equestrian Australia officials program ensuring that provisions, insurances, training opportunities, protections and terms of engagement exist for classifiers as they do for other Equestrian Australia officials.

6.4.4 Professional conduct standards that all Classification Personnel must comply with are outlined in the Equestrian Australia Classification Rules. These standards comply with the IPC Code of Ethics and are in accordance with the PA Classification Standard: Classification Personnel and Training.

6.4.5 Equestrian Australia has within its Classification Rules (and/or other relevant rules) procedures for reporting, investigating and subsequent disciplinary action as a result of violation with the standards outlined in Article 6.4.4.

### 6.5 Safeguards and Integrity

6.5.1 Safeguards specific to child safety practices and legislation requirements are adopted in Equestrian Australia classification policies and procedures and are expected to be understood and practised at all levels of the sport. Any Equestrian Australia classifier or classification personnel who

interact with children under 18 years must hold a valid Working with Children Check.

6.5.2 Informed and appropriate measures are taken to ensure that all classification activities are practiced in a manner that protects the physical and psychological health of Athletes and all of the parties to Equestrian Australia Classification activities.

6.5.3 Equestrian Australia will comply with local public health advice and review any health risks associated with the delivery of classification activities. Classification will be implemented in accordance with standard infection control procedures and relevant state and national work health and safety legislation.

6.5.4 Systems and safeguards are in place to protect all people involved in classification services. Any classification related disputes or member protection issues are managed through the Equestrian Australia Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy

6.5.5 Protests and Appeals

(a) Protest processes are outlined in the Equestrian Australia Classification rules in accordance with the PA Classification Standard: Protests and Appeals. A protest is the procedure by which a reasoned objection to an Athlete's Sport Class is submitted and subsequently resolved.

(b) Appeal processes are outlined in the Equestrian Australia Classification rules, in accordance with the PA Classification Standard: Protests and Appeals. An Appeal is the process to resolve Classification procedural disputes.

(c) National Level Classification Appeals are referred to the National Sports Tribunal in accordance with National Sports Tribunal legislation.

6.5.6 Intentional Misrepresentation

(a) Procedures on the management of Intentional Misrepresentation are outlined in the Equestrian Australia Classification rules in accordance with the PA Classification Standard: Intentional Misrepresentation.

(b) In accordance with the PA Classification Standard: Intentional Misrepresentation:

- Classification intelligence, allegations, investigations and disciplinary proceedings relating to athletes competing in International Level competition follow the processes outlined by FEI.

- National Level Intentional Misrepresentation is deemed to be Competition Manipulation under the National Integrity Framework and will be managed by Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) in accordance with the Equestrian Australia Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy.

- (b) Equestrian Australia recognises, respects and enforces any sanction imposed on an Athlete or Athlete support person for IM as notified by the IPC, an IF, SIA or any other authorised body in accordance with the Equestrian Australia Classification Rules.

#### 6.5.7 Classification Intelligence Gathering and Investigations

- (a) Procedures regarding the management Classification intelligence, are outlined in the PA Classification Standards: Intentional Misrepresentation and Classification Data Protection. All sources of classification intelligence are protected.
- (b) Equestrian Australia will cooperate and encourage the cooperation of Equestrian Australia members with any classification investigative process.

### 6.6 Equestrian Australia High Performance Program

Equestrian Australia:

- 6.6.1 Expects all High Performance Athletes and Personnel will abide by FEI classification rules and the requirements for the participation of Athletes in international level competition;
- 6.6.2 Will conduct screening and proactively plan for international classification opportunities for Athletes once they are nominated to high performance programs and talent programs and as required for the qualification for Paralympic Games and other benchmark events;
- 6.6.3 Will provide education for all team members on their classification roles and responsibilities including, but not limited to, any applicable Codes of Conduct; and
- 6.6.4 Provide proactive support structures and processes to minimise risk and support the maintenance of wellbeing for Athletes and staff undertaking International level classification.

### 6.7 Data Storage and protection

Equestrian Australia ensures that lawful processes are in place for collection, processing, storage, use and retention of personal and classification data. These processes and procedures are in accordance with the PA Classification Standard: Classification Data Protection.

## 6.8 Classification Master List

The Classification master list of all Australian athletes who have been classified for Para Equestrian at a provisional, national and international level, including each athlete's name, sex, year of birth, state, sport class and sport class status is published on the Equestrian Australia website.

## 6.9 Classification Education and Awareness

6.9.1 Equestrian Australia will provide Classification resources and education activities for Athletes, Athlete Support Personnel, Equestrian Australia member organisations and any other relevant stakeholders (media, spectators) for all levels of their sport pathway including:

- Classification pathway and processes for their sport;
- Eligible impairment types for their Para-sport;
- The IPC Code, PA Classification Policy and Standards and relevant IF and/or Equestrian Australia Classification rules;
- Athlete, athlete support personnel and classification personnel rights and responsibilities; and
- Classification integrity and intentional misrepresentation information.

6.9.2 Equestrian Australia is committed to the involvement of Athletes in the development and delivery of such education and awareness programs.

## 6.10 Classification Research and Innovation

6.10.1 Equestrian Australia will support the FEI, and promote active contribution from Equestrian Australia members, in the development of the FEI's classification system.

6.10.2 Any research conducted or participated in by Equestrian Australia must comply with nationally recognised ethical standards and research practices.

6.10.3 Equestrian Australia will work collaboratively with PA for the continuous improvement of classification activities in its sport.

## 6.11 Changes to Classification Systems

6.11.1 Equestrian Australia will integrate changes made to FEI classification systems as soon as possible after the change is made and will align any changes as closely to the IF system as is practical.

6.11.2 Equestrian Australia will provide appropriate notice to Athletes and other stakeholders of anticipated changes to the classification system and any other change(s) that might impact on Sport Class allocation. Notice will

include a rationale for change, the proposed timelines for implementation, any transition rules and processes for feedback as applicable.

- 6.11.3 Equestrian Australia will notify PA of classification system changes and any other change(s) that might impact on Sport Class allocation with the details of the changes proposed, the proposed timelines for implementation and transition rules. PA will be provided an opportunity to submit feedback, prior to implementation of any changes.
- 6.11.4 Education and wellbeing supports are available to Athletes and athlete support personnel who are affected by changes in Classification rules.

## 7 Responsibilities of Athletes and Officials of Equestrian Australia Teams

The roles and responsibilities of Equestrian Australia Team members include:

- 7.1 Conducting themselves in a manner that is consistent with the PA Classification Policy, Equestrian Australia Code of Conduct, IPC Code and IPC Code of Ethics;
- 7.2 Adhering to their responsibilities outlined in the FEI and Equestrian Australia Classification Rules; and
- 7.3 Participating in Team member training or education as required by Equestrian Australia.

## 8 Conditions

- 8.1 Equestrian Australia will support and monitor the compliance of its members to meet the conditions of the PA Classification Policy and Standards.
- 8.2 On request by Equestrian Australia, Equestrian Australia members must report on compliance with this Classification Policy. Explanations for any non-compliance must be included.
- 8.3 Subject to the approval of the Equestrian Australia Board, the following sanctions may be applied to Equestrian Australia members who are non-compliant with this Classification Policy:
  - 8.3.1 Withholding some or all funding or support;
  - 8.3.2 Suspension of Equestrian Australia membership;
  - 8.3.3 Exclusion from Equestrian Australia events; and/or

8.3.4 Reporting the Equestrian Australia member to Australian Sports Commission (where the organisation is recognised by the Australian Sports Commission).

8.4 Disciplinary action may be taken against individuals who breach the terms of this Policy.

## 9 Provision

9.1 Equestrian Australia will appoint a person who will be responsible for monitoring progress, implementing this Policy and for providing advice to the CEO, Equestrian Australia Board and Equestrian Australia's Members on its implementation.

## 10 Definitions

<b>Appeal:</b>	The means by which a complaint that a sports federation has made an unfair decision during the Classification process is resolved.
<b>Athlete:</b>	A person who participates in Para-sport at the international, national or local level.
<b>Athlete Evaluation:</b>	The process by which an athlete is assessed in accordance with the classification rules, so that they may be allocated a sport class and sport class status.
<b>Athlete Support Personnel:</b>	Any individual who supports an athlete, including but not limited to coaches, team staff, medical or para-medical specialists, interpreters, administrators, carers and parents/ legal guardians.
<b>Classification:</b>	Grouping athletes into sport classes ( <del>Grades</del> ) according to the extent to which their impairment affects the fundamental activities in each specific sport or discipline.
<b>Classification Personnel:</b>	Any individuals who act with the authority of an NSO/NSOD for any component of the classification program in their sport.

<b>Classifier:</b>	A person authorised as an official by an IF or NSO/NSOD to evaluate Athletes as part of a classification panel.
<b>Eligible Impairment:</b>	A physical, intellectual or vision impairment, designated as being a prerequisite for competing in Para-sport, as designated by the IPC Code.
<b>International Sport Federation (IF):</b>	The International Sport Federation (IF) recognised by the IPC as the sole world-wide representative of a sport for athletes with an impairment that has been granted the status of a Para-sport by the IPC.
<b>IPC Athlete Classification Code and International Standards (IPC Code):</b>	The IPC Code is the document which details the purpose of classification, policies and procedures that should be common to all sport's classification systems and sets principles to be applied by all sports within the Paralympic Movement. The IPC Code is supplemented by the International Standards.
<b>National Integrity Framework:</b>	A suite of integrity-related policies promulgated by Sport Integrity Australia which include the National Integrity Framework, the Competition Manipulation and Sports Wagering Policy, and the Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy.
<b>National Sport Organisation (NSO)/ National Sport Organisations for people with Disability (NSOD):</b>	The national sporting organisation recognised by PA and the Australian Sports Commission for the delivery of Para-sport within Australia.
<b>National Sports Tribunal (NST):</b>	The National Sports Tribunal established by the <i>National Sports Tribunal Act 2019 (Cth)</i> .
<b>National Sports Tribunal legislation:</b>	The <i>National Sports Tribunal Act 2019 (Cth)</i> , the <i>National Sports Tribunal Rule 2020 (Cth)</i> and the <i>National Sports Tribunal (Practice and Procedure) Determination 2021 (Cth)</i> .

<b>PA Classification Standards:</b>	The PA Classification Standard published by PA from time to time.
<b>PA Member:</b>	Member organisations of PA (who pay an annual membership fee and have a right to vote at the PA Annual General Meeting) under the Company's constitution.
<b>Para-sports:</b>	All sports for athletes with a physical, intellectual or vision impairment, on a Paralympic Games program, or recognised by the IPC.
<b>Protest:</b>	The procedure by which a reasoned objection to an Athlete's sport class is submitted and subsequently resolved.
<b>Sport Integrity Australia</b>	Sport Integrity Australia, a non-corporate Commonwealth entity established by the <i>Sport Integrity Australia Act 2020</i> (Cth).

## 11 Relevant policies, codes and standards

- IPC Athlete Classification Code and International Standards
- IPC Classification Code Model of Best Practice - National Classification
- IPC Code of Ethics
- PA Classification Standard - Eligible Impairments
- PA Classification Standard - Athlete Evaluation
- PA Classification Standard - Protests and Appeals
- PA Classification Standard - Classification Personnel and Training
- PA Classification Standard - Classification Data Protection
- PA Classification Standard - Intentional Misrepresentation
- Equestrian Australia Code of Conduct
- Other Equestrian Australia policies (including but not limited to People Protection Policy and Privacy Policy)

To view all Equestrian Australia policies, including those relating to Classification, please visit <https://www.equestrian.org.au/policies>

To view all PA Classification policies, please visit the [Paralympics Australia Website](#).