

Terms of Reference for the Equestrian Australia National Exemption Committee - Dressage

1. Background

A Committee was established several years ago to ensure athletes with a disability were provided with the opportunity to compete in EA dressage competitions under fair and equitable conditions.

2. Membership of the Exemption Committee

The Exemption Committee is a sub-committee of the EA Dressage Committee (EADC) and shall comprise of the following with a min. of 3 members:-

- Accredited Para Equestrian Classifier(s)
- Dressage judge(s) with a knowledge of judging athletes with a disability (EA “Ä” Level Dressage Judge preferred)
- Appropriately qualified coach(es) with experience coaching athletes with a disability (EA Accredited Coach preferred).

3. Appointment

The EADC, following consultation with the current Exemption Committee, EA Head Classifier and EA Para-Equestrian Committee where appropriate, shall appoint the committee members based on their experience in the field and existing committee composition following a call for expressions of interest (EOI).

EOI's will be called as required to fulfill vacancies on the Exemption Committee.

All Committee members must be members of EA.

Administration support to the Committee is provided through the EA National Office.

4. Membership Term

- (a) One term equates to four years, after which Committee Members may seek re-appointment via the EOI process.
- (b) The current exemption committee members will continue to be active until replacement members have been appointed and trained.
- (c) Should a position become vacant during a committee member's tenure or too few EOI's are received, these positions may be filled by the EADC based on recommendations made by current Exemption Committee, EA Head Classifier and EA Para-Equestrian Committee. This appointment will be for the remainder of the vacating member's tenure.

5. Purpose of the Exemption Committee

The Committee has been established to oversee the decision-making process for the exemption to EA National Dressage rules and to ensure the rights of the athlete with – a disability is protected. All information provided is reviewed for relevance to the request.

The committee may also oversee exemption requests for Interschools (for other disciplines participating in Interschools, that do not currently have their own exemption rules). The same exemption process will be used as for Dressage, however, a Discipline Specific expert (eg. NDC Chair for the specific Discipline) will be included in the review of the exemption application, allowing for the inclusion of all School Aged Equestrians to apply to represent their school in Equestrian Sport using the required equipment to keep them safe while competing.

6. Principles

The principles that will be applied:

- a) Social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights will be considered in all aspects of the exemption process:-
 - Athletes with a disability will be treated with respect
 - All information provided by the athlete is confidential

- b) Decision making regarding the approval of requested allowances, special aids or modified equipment is based on the following principles:
 - Enables the athlete to ride a horse in dressage or other Interschools discipline
 - Should only be used if required, thereby athletes should compete with no aids or special equipment if possible
 - Must allow the athlete to compete safely and is safe for the horse and others around the athlete
 - Must be universally available to all those who require it (cost and availability can be factors here)
 - Needs to be fair and thereby regulated by EA. The allowance/aid/equipment should not provide an advantage over another athlete competing in the competition
 - Should not generate performance itself e.g use of robotics– that is up to the athlete (and the horse)

7. Roles and responsibilities of the Exemption Committee

The role of the Exemption Committee is to consider each application in respect of the athlete's disability and its effect on their ability to perform under the current EA Dressage Rules. Equity for athletes with impairments and fairness of competition for all competitors are paramount. Each application is considered on its merit based on the information provided.

Exemption to the EA Dressage Rules applies to athletes who:

- a) Have an identified diagnosed health condition and resulting disability and supported by medical documentation but who are not eligible for Para equestrian classification
or
- b) Athletes who would be eligible for classification but do not wish to be classified for PE competition
and
Compete in dressage competitions run under EA National Dressage Rules

The exemption Committee will be responsible for the following tasks:-

- a) Receive Applications for Exemption from EA National office.
- b) Review each application and approve or not approve.
- c) Seek additional information if required and observe athletes if needed prior to making a decision.
- d) To advise the athlete of any modifications/recommendations required to approve the application.
- e) In the case of an application not being approved, reasons will be provided by the Committee and communicated to the athlete for such a decision.
- f) Notify EA National office of the decision.
- g) Ensure all records of athletes granted/not granted exemption held by EA are correct.
- h) Liaise with the EA as required regarding athletes who hold exemption cards.

A chairperson of the Committee is appointed by mutual agreement.

Role of the Chairperson:-

- a) Liaise with EA National Office regarding issues pertaining to exemption
- b) Liaise with Committee members regarding individual applications
- c) Liaise with the athlete if required
- d) Inform EA National Office of the decision regarding each application as determined by the Committee
- e) Maintain a record of communication amongst Committee members

The role of the EA National Office:-

- a) Accept enquiries from athletes regarding exemptions
- b) Receive applications and check all details are completed including current membership
- c) Email applications with other relevant information to the Committee members
- d) Liaise with chairperson regarding final decision
- e) Send Exemption letter to the athlete with a covering letter
- f) Maintain a data base of all exemptions approved
- g) File applications with a copy of the letter
- h) Process renewals as above

8. Decision making and quorum

The Exemption Committee:-

- a) Will seek to support the resolution of issues in an open and collaborative manner
- b) Will work towards achieving consensus from members on decisions made by the group. In the event of a contested decision advice may be sought from those outside of the Committee e.g. legal or medical experts or those with a sound knowledge of para equestrian/equestrian competition.
- c) All attempts will be made to ensure a decision is arrived at within six weeks of each member receiving the application. The athlete should be notified of the decision within two months of application.
- d) Athletes wishing to appeal or discuss the decision are encouraged to contact the EA National Office in the first place. If the issue cannot be dealt with by the EA National Office it will be referred to the Chairperson who will refer it to other Committee members if required.

9. Location

As the Exemption Committee comprises members located around Australia, communication is carried out by e-mail for the most part.

10. Accountabilities

The Exemption Committee is accountable to Equestrian Australia Dressage Committee and must abide by all relevant EA Policies.

All Exemption Committee members will be privy to sensitive and confidential information. At no stage should this information be publicly referred to, disclosed or discussed to any third party outside of the committee and EA staff. All members will be required to sign the EA Confidentiality Agreement upon appointment.

Members must adhere to the EA Code of Conduct.