



Skateboarding High Performance

Athlete Categorisation Policy

**August
2025**

SECTION 1 – DEFINITIONS

AIS	Australian Institute of Sport
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
dAIS	Direct Athlete Investment Scheme
HP	High Performance
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IPP	Individual Performance Plan
NACF	National Athlete Categorisation Framework
NIN	National Institute Network
SCP	Skate Categorisation Panel
SIA	Sport Integrity Australia
SIS/SAS	State Institute Sport / State Academy of Sport
TSM	Technical Skills Matrix
WITTW	What it Takes to Win

SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND TO CATEGORISATION

1 WHAT IS CATEGORISATION

The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) has a formal National Athlete Categorisation Framework (NACF) that funded sports, like Skate Australia (Skateboarding High Performance (HP)), must align to. The NACF provides a consistent national system across all sports for identifying and tracking athletes along the HP pathway. The NACF has 6 levels that an athlete can be assigned against, with each level aligning with expected (time and performance) progression to Pinnacle (Olympic Games) success. The AIS has developed an evidence based performance framework called What it Takes to Win (WITTW) that is used as the foundation of a Sports Categorisation Framework.

Athletes (and parents and coaches) who have an interest in being categorised should make themselves familiar with the framework by visiting this [LINK >](#)

2 WHAT IS WITTW

WITTW identifies the key performance factors required for an athlete (or team) to win at the Olympic Games (Pinnacle Event). Skate Australia in collaboration with the AIS, analyses data from past Olympic cycles and identifies performance benchmarks that correlate with podium success. The components of a WITTW framework include;

- a) Technical (event specific skills, e.g. trick execution/precision)
- b) Tactical (decision making and competition strategy)
- c) Physical (strength, endurance, injury resilience)
- d) Psychological (mindset, performing under pressure)
- e) Performance lifestyle (recovery, wellbeing, balance of education/career)
- f) Demands of competition (age of medal winners, progression through the sport)

Underpinning the WITTW, Skate Australia has developed a Technical Skills Matrix (TSM) for Park and Street disciplines for every level of Athlete Categorisation. The TSM will guide the Skate Categorisation Panel (SCP) on assessment of athlete performance and capability.

3 BENEFITS OF CATEGORISATION

Being a categorised Skater allows both Skate Australia and State Institutes of Sport/State Academies of Sport (SIS/SAS) to prioritise support to athletes based on their Individual Performance Plan (IPP). Support for categorised athletes will differ per level, where someone beginning their categorisation journey will have different needs and support requirements to a podium level (world class) athlete where typically the most support (including financial) is directed.

As athletes progress through the Performance Pathway (levels of categorisation), support requirements will change, and the Skate Australia and SIS/SAS athlete support models are built in a way to ensure this is catered for.

Being a categorised skater does not guarantee SIS/SAS scholarship as this is support provided at the discretion of the relevant SIS/SAS. There is a variation between the support offered and structure between SIS/SAS programs. It also does not automatically qualify an athlete for selection to an Australian team i.e. an athlete does not need to be categorised to represent Australia.

SECTION 2 – ELIGIBILITY & OBLIGATIONS

4 ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for Athlete Categorisation, athletes must:

- a) be an Australia citizen and eligible to represent Australia at the LA and/or Brisbane Olympic Games;
- b) be a current registered member of Skate Australia;
- c) be in good financial standing with Skate Australia;
- d) comply with all anti-doping requirements of the IOC, AIS, SIA and Skate Australia;
- e) not bring themselves, the sport, Skate Australia or any of its partners into disrepute;
- f) be actively training towards the next pinnacle event.
- g) be assessed as ready (athlete readiness – see Appendix 2) to meet the obligations of a categorised skater as assessed by the SCP through information provided in the categorisation application process

It is not expected that athletes under the age of 12 would be considered for categorisation due to developmental readiness. Exceptions may be made under extenuating circumstances.

5 OBLIGATIONS OF CATEGORISED ATHLETES

It is expected that a categorised skater;

- a) Signs an annual Skate Australia Athlete Agreement which outlines a range of obligations as well as a commitment to code of conduct and expected behaviour of a national squad member including committing to the Skate Australia National Integrity Framework.
- b) Maintains an IPP, co-developed with coaches and HP staff.
- c) Trains and competes at the level expected for their categorisation level.
- d) Maintains lifestyle and behaviour standards conducive to sporting excellence (nutrition, recovery, mental health, education balance).
- e) Engages in regular servicing with Performance Support personnel.
- f) Participates in education session (integrity, wellbeing, media training etc.).

SECTION 3 – CATEGORISATION APPLICATION

6 SKATEBOARDING CATEGORISATION PANEL

Athlete Categorisation will be determined by the SCP. The SCP will provide their expert judgement in assessing a skater against the Skateboarding Categorisation Performance Matrix (**Appendix 1**) and the TSM, noting that a skater may not always meet all the detailed criteria at a particular categorisation level, but will have been able to demonstrate to the SCP that their overall skill level across the technical themes is consistent with a skater categorised at that level. The SCP is comprised of the following;

- a) General Manager, High Performance (Chair)
- b) National Technical Lead
- c) Skate Australia or SIS/SAS engaged coaching staff
- d) Independent Members (non-voting observers)
 - i. AIS Representative
 - ii. SIS/SAS Representative

7 CATEGORISATION PROCESS

- a) Athlete categorisation will be formally reviewed annually at the end of each calendar year.
 - i. The dates will be communicated annually, to ensure alignment with the domestic and internal competition calendars;
- b) At this time, athletes may be added, transitioned out, or moved to a different category;
- c) Athletes will remain at a categorisation level until such time as they are moved or transitioned out;
- d) Athletes are expected to demonstrate progression and improvement in areas of performance in line with the TSM & WITTW that should be identified in their IPP (only for existing categorised athletes);
- e) Athletes may be excluded at any time from Categorisation at the discretion of Skate Australia, following endorsement of the HP System Categorisation Panel (led by the AIS).
- f) The annual process for categorising athletes will generally be as follows:

Step 1 Policy and timeframe for new athletes to apply for Categorisation released.

Step 2 Application process for new athletes closes and assessment of Existing and New Athletes against the Categorisation Performance Matrix & TSM is undertaken.

Step 3 Submission of Athletes to be categorised (including relevant data) sent to the AIS. SIS/SAS are notified by Skate Australia.

Step 4 AIS review and approve submissions relative to the Categorisation Performance Matrix & TSM to ensure consistency of application.

Step 5 Categorisation of athletes confirmed by Skate Australia and communicated with SIS/SAS

8 FACTORS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION

- a) In determining a athletes current performance standard and future Olympic performance potential, the SCP must consider the following factors in assessing athletes who have the best chance of contributing to the achievement of Skate Australia's HP goals;
 - i. Athletes who satisfy the performance criteria outlined in **Appendix 1 – Skateboarding Categorisation Performance Matrix**.
 - ii. Athletes who satisfy the technical, tactical, physical and mental performance characteristics set out in the WITTW
 - iii. Athletes who meet the criteria set out in the TSM for Park or Street disciplines.

- iv. Athletes' performance trajectory including progress against their IPP (returning athletes ONLY)
- b) A skater must meet the Competition Performance standard (outlined in Appendix 1) to be categorised at a Podium Potential or higher level for the first time. Non-result factors can be used in maintaining a skater at this level.
- c) If a competition is identified as having a low quality of field (based on World Rankings) the SCP will take this into consideration when referencing the performance criteria in Appendix 1.
- d) Where a skater achieves a 'one off' performance standard and there remains uncertainty as to their ability to repeat that performance, based on the SCP's assessment of that athlete, discretion may be applied to the level of categorisation, if applicable at all.
- e) the athletes age in reference to worlds standards, and progression against WITTW.
- f) An athletes ongoing commitment to the level of training necessary to perform, communication with national staff, adherence to IPP's and motivation to succeed.
- g) Athletes cannot be demoted between Podium levels (Podium, Podium Ready, Podium Potential) and Developing, or between Developing and Emerging. Athletes who fail to progress or are at a categorisation level longer than the expected timeframe will be transitioned from categorisation.
- h) It is acknowledged that athlete's progression is not always linear and therefore performance plateaus and regression may be considered. Expected timeframes would be communicated with athletes and only where there is evidence of strong athlete commitment and compliance to continuous improvement.
- i) Athletes who have previously been categorised and subsequently de-categorised must have demonstrated improved performance progression to be considered for categorisation again.
- j) The performance standards may change over the LA2028 cycle; Skate Australia will provide a minimum 6-month notice period of any changes.

9 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Categorised athletes and other high performance stakeholders will be notified by email of their categorisation following endorsement of the Skate Australia categorisation list by the AIS. Only existing categorised athletes, or those that applied for categorisation will be communicated with.

10 APPEALS PROCESS

Only athletes who have previously been categorised may request reconsideration of the decision regarding their exit from categorisation or their change of categorisation level (Request). This Request must be put in writing to the General Manager High Performance within seven days of the notification to the affected athlete. In their Request, the athlete must address either or both of the following grounds for reconsideration, namely that the Panel;

- a) made an error of fact, or
- b) failed to consider a relevant performance standard.

Upon receipt of a valid Request, the General Manager High Performance will ask an Independent Observer to review the athlete's Request. Following this review, the Independent Observer may invite the SCP to reconsider their decision or may request the SCP provide further detail to the athlete addressing it's concerns and/or the reasons for the panel's decision. The Independent Observer should provide reasons for their decision to the affected athlete and SCP.
For the avoidance of doubt:

- a) The Independent Observer is not entitled to make or substitute selection decisions; any changes would need to be made by the SCP;
- b) athletes are not entitled to appeal against the categorisation of any other athlete; and

- c) there is no further avenue of appeal.

11 ATHLETE SUPPORT

- a) Athletes that are categorised will be prioritised for support from Skate Australia, including financial support and access to performance support servicing.
- b) Skate Australia has developed an Athlete Support Model that gives a guidance of financial support available to athletes at each level of categorisation linked to ones IPP.
- c) Athletes at higher levels of categorisation could expect to receive a greater level of support than those in lower categories.
- d) In all cases, the provision of services and support to categorised athletes is subject to available resourcing.
- e) Athletes will have differing access to resources in their SIS/SAS due to the different structures in place across the country (programs versus individual scholarship programs).
- f) Being a categorised athlete does not guarantee access to services or support through a SIS/SAS.
- g) Skate Australia categorised athletes may be eligible to access the AIS dAIS Scheme if they meet the eligibility criteria.
- h) The dAIS Scheme provides athletes with direct funding support. Athlete nominations are subject to AIS approval and in accordance with total AIS grant funding allocation and athlete ranking within each level of categorisation. More information on dAIS is available at https://www.sportaus.gov.au/grants_and_funding/dais

12 SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

It is recognised that at various stages of a performance cycle athletes may not have the opportunity to fully demonstrate their performance capability and performance trajectory. For a variety of reasons (i.e., injury or illness, including mental health and pregnancy, or agreed break i.e. family/personal bereavement, school/education or work demands or financial hardship etc.) athletes may miss the opportunity to train and/or compete.

To be considered for Discretionary Special Consideration an athlete must have:

- a) In the case of injury/illness/Mental Health or Pregnancy:
 - i. A confirmed diagnosis from a qualified health professional and that diagnosis has been provided to the Skate Australia Chief Medical Officer.
 - ii. The injury/illness/ Mental Health or Pregnancy has prevented the athlete from either preparing for or performing in key World Skate, Olympic event or domestic camp and competition activity.
- b) For other “agreed break” Discretionary Special Consideration applications must have had the prior approval of the Skate Australia General Manager High Performance.

In all cases athletes must have an agreed and clearly articulated return to sport plan with Skate Australia to be considered for Discretionary Special Consideration categorisation by the SCP.

13 AMENDMENTS & REVIEW

The Skate Australia Athlete Categorisation Policy for Park and Street disciplines and the associated support documents will be reviewed annually following the implementation of the Athlete Categorisation process.

The purpose of this review will be to ensure that the Policy and Framework remain relevant and contemporary and move forward with the evolution of Park and Street disciplines. This review may include consideration of new performance data as well as changes to competition and qualification formats.

Appendix 1 – Skate Australia (Skateboarding) Categorisation Performance Matrix

Cycle	Age Criteria	Athlete Categorisation	AIS National Athlete Categorisation Framework Description	Skate Australia Skateboarding Profile Description	Expected timeframe at level*
LA2028	Athletes can only be supported at Podium Potential or above if they are age eligible under World Skate competition rules	Podium (Performance Confirmation)	Athletes who have medalled at pinnacle event or have been the world #1 or medalled at a World Championship event in the current cycle in the past 24 months and demonstrates a trajectory capable of winning a medal at the current cycle pinnacle event aligned to the WITTW as referenced in the SA athlete performance potential matrix.	The athlete has medalled (podium) at the most recent World Championships in a non-Olympic year or the most recent Olympic Games (within the last 24 months). And the athlete demonstrates technical, tactical, physical, mental and commitment to excellence attributes consistent with a Podium athlete as described in the SA WITTW and as demonstrated at World Skate events. And the athlete demonstrates a performance trajectory through progress and commitment to improvement as described in their IPP.	N/A
		Podium Ready (Performance Ready)	Displays performance capability aligned with WITTW, demonstrating a trajectory capable of winning a medal at current cycle pinnacle event as referenced in the SA athlete performance potential matrix.	The athlete has delivered a Top 8 result at the most recent World Championships in a non-Olympic year or the most recent Olympic Games (within the last 12 months). And the athlete demonstrates technical, tactical, physical, mental and commitment to excellence attributes consistent with a Podium Ready athlete as described in the SA WITTW, the TSM and as demonstrated at World Skate events. And the athlete demonstrates a performance trajectory through progress and commitment to improvement as described in their IPP.	1-4yrs
		Podium Potential (Performance Potential)	Displays performance capability to qualify and compete in current cycle pinnacle event, contributing to inspiration and wellbeing outcomes and performance capability is aligned to WITTW demonstrating a trajectory capable of podium performance as referenced in the SA athlete performance potential matrix.	The athlete has delivered a Top 16 result at the last World Championships in a non-Olympic year or the most recent Olympic Games (within the last 12 months) And the athlete demonstrates technical, tactical, physical, mental and commitment to excellence attributes consistent with a Podium Potential athlete as described in the SA WITTW, TSM and as demonstrated at World Skate events. And the athlete demonstrates a performance trajectory through progress and commitment to improvement as described in their IPP.	1-3yrs
LA2028 / BNE2032	It is not expected that athletes under the age of 12 would be considered for categorisation due to developmental readiness. Exceptions may be made under extenuating circumstances.	Developing (Athlete Development Verification)	Displays performance potential aligned with WITTW and demonstrates a trajectory capable of contributing to future (next) cycle outcomes as referenced in the SA athlete performance potential matrix.	The athlete demonstrates technical proficiency equivalent to a Top 32 ranked athlete as described in the TSM. And the athlete demonstrates a performance trajectory through progress and commitment to improvement, monitored in an IPP that is informed by WITTW.	1-2yrs to progress to Podium Potential categorisation
		Emerging (Athlete Development Confirmation)	Displays performance progression informed by SA athlete performance parameters as set out in the WITTW and the LA athlete development framework	The athlete demonstrates technical proficiency equivalent to a Top 60 ranked athlete as described in the TSM. And the athlete demonstrates a performance trajectory through progress and commitment to improvement, monitored in an IPP that is informed by WITTW.	1-2yrs to progress to Developing categorisation level.
LA2028	Same as Podium – Podium Potential cohort	Representative	Athletes identified as having the potential to be selected to represent Australia at the current cycle Olympic Games and who will contribute to the HP 2032+ strategy outcomes of wellbeing and inspiration.	The athlete is not considered to be medal potential at a World Championships or Olympic Games but could be part of an Australian skate team participating at World Skate or Olympic events. To be eligible for this level an athlete must have previously represented Australia at a World Championships or Olympic Games.	N/A

*This will continue to be refined in line with World standards and is to be used as a guide only at this stage.

Appendix 2 – Athlete Readiness

It is recognised by Skate Australia, that while World Skate has a minimum age restriction on competing at World Skate events, there can be benefits to younger athletes in accessing coaching, performance support and other opportunities (i.e., participation in camps) to educate and prepare athletes effectively to compete internationally. While there are benefits there are also significant risks to young athletes who are exposed to the demands and pressures of the high-performance environment when they are not developmentally ready.

The early years of a child's maturation are a time of significant physical, social, and emotional development. The hormonal changes and rapid brain development will impact the way a child thinks, acts, and feels. Mental health challenges often begin during childhood and can contribute to poor health outcomes if left untreated. Early intervention and prevention are key to promoting good mental health and wellbeing. For these reasons Skate Australia is currently working with industry experts to develop an approach to "readiness" assessment that will be implemented and supported through athlete categorisation. Each situation will be assessed on a case by case basis and at the discretion of the SCP.

APPROVAL AND CHANGE LOG

Date	Summary of changes
August 2025	Final submission to AIS
September 2025	Released