



NATIONAL ELIGIBILITY GUIDANCE NOTES

VERSION: May 2023

ATHLETE WITH INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT OR AUTISM NATIONAL CLASSIFICATION ELIGIBILITY GUIDANCE NOTES

Introduction

Paralympics New Zealand (PNZ) is the National Sport Organisation affiliated to Virtus (International Federation for Sports for athletes with an Intellectual Impairment) and is responsible for managing and overseeing the eligibility process for athletes with Intellectual Impairment or Autism wishing to compete in the Para sports of Para swimming, Para athletics and Para table tennis or Virtus sports.

Defining Intellectual Impairment

The Primary Eligibility Criteria used by Virtus/PNZ is based upon the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disability (AAIDD, 2010) definition of intellectual Impairment which is consistent with that of the World Health Organisation (WHO, ICD-10 and ICF, 2001), and states:

“Intellectual Disability is a disability characterised by significant limitation both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before the age of 22.”

Eligibility

Minimal eligibility criterion has been introduced to define who is eligible with an intellectual impairment for Para sports in New Zealand, and Virtus competitions catering for athletes with Intellectual Impairment and another significant impairment, or autism.

Eligibility Criteria

Based upon the AAIDD definition for intellectual impairment, (above), the PNZ Minimal Impairment Criteria for Eligibility to compete in Para sport, and Virtus competitions is:

- Significant impairment in intellectual functioning.
- Significant limitations in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills.
- Significant impairment in intellectual functioning and significant additional functional impairment (Virtus competitions)
- Intellectual impairment must be evident during the developmental period, which is from conception to 22 years of age.

- Diagnosis of Autism

Evidence

Evidence needs to be submitted to support a diagnosis of intellectual impairment, or intellectual impairment and other significant impairment or autism.

Where possible this will be the results of a formal psychological assessment and medical assessment (where appropriate)

If this is not available, then the following will be accepted:

- A signed statement by a psychologist, medical doctor or pediatrician confirming a diagnosis of intellectual impairment, autism or intellectual impairment and significant additional functional impairment (if appropriate).
- Evidence that the student is on ORS (Ongoing Resourcing Scheme) because of an intellectual impairment or autism. The student may attend a special school, a special unit at a mainstream school, or be included in a mainstream class through the support of an adapted curriculum as set out in an individual education plan, and/or, proof of currently receiving one or more of the following services because of a diagnosis of intellectual impairment or autism: (accommodation, employment, financial support)
- Intellectual impairment must be evident during the developmental period which is from conception to 22 years of age.

Completing the Application Form

- Page 1 and 2 should be completed by the athlete's representative and athlete.
- Page 3 and 4 should be completed by a medical doctor, pediatrician, or psychologist.
- Page 5 should be completed by the National Eligibility Officer (NEO)
- The form, together with relevant documents supporting evidence of intellectual impairment, any additional physical impairment or autism should then be sent to Paralympics New Zealand.

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Submitting the Application

Applications should be submitted by email or by post to: -

classification@paralympics.org.nz

Classification Manager
Paralympics New Zealand
Suite 2.10, Axis Building, 1 Cleveland Road,
Parnell, Auckland 1052, New Zealand

Storing and Using Information

PNZ will use the information submitted within the application for the purpose of determining the Sports Class and Sports Class Status of the athlete.

International Eligibility and Classification

Para athletes with Intellectual Impairment, intellectual impairment and significant other impairment, or autism who are identified by their sport as having talent and looking to progress on an international pathway will need to go through the formal Virtus Eligibility Process

There are three (2) levels of Virtus eligibility for athletes with an Intellectual Impairment,

- Level 1 Full Primary Eligibility, which permits entry to Virtus Regional, World Championships and Global Games. Athlete must be on the Virtus Master list.
- Level 2: Full Primary Eligibility, on the Virtus master list, and a sport specific classification, which is necessary for Paralympic Sports.

If you wish to be considered for full Primary Eligibility for International competitions, please contact the PNZ Classification Manager at:

classification@paralympics.org.nz