Official Qualifying Meet
Considerations Prior to Application

Qualifying Meets for National Officials Certification (OQMs)
OQMs provide opportunities for evaluation of USA Swimming officials for N2 and N3 Certification and Recertification. Meets must meet the requirements contained in the Meet Requirements section of this document to be considered for approval as an OQM. These meets may include Region, Zone, Sectional, and LSC Championship meets. USA Swimming National, US Open, Pro Series, Junior National, and Futures meets are automatically approved and do not require an application.

Evaluator Considerations and Requirements

**N2 Evaluators**
- Are chosen by the LSC Officials Chair
- Must have current N3 Stroke & Turn Certification
- Must possess a current N2 certification in the positions they are named to evaluate: Chief Judge (CJ), Starter (SR), Deck Referee (DR), Administrative Referee (AR) and/or Administrative Official (AO)
- An N2 AO may perform an N2 AR evaluation if granted permission by the LSC OC
- May only give advancing and recertification evaluations at the N2 level

**N3 Stroke & Turn Evaluators**
- Are chosen by the LSC Officials Chair
- Possess a current N3 Stroke & Turn certification

**N3 National Evaluators**
- Are experienced officials authorized by the National Officials Committee (NOC)
  - The list of “Approved N3 Evaluators” is maintained by the NOC for the respective positions on the USA Swimming website
- May provide evaluations for N2 advancement and recertification
- May only provide evaluations for which they are approved by the NOC for N3 initial and/or N3 final
- N3 initial evaluators are also permitted to complete recertification evaluations

**Additional Considerations**
- Provision of approved National Evaluators is the responsibility of the meet host or LSC
- Recommendations may be solicited from the USA Swimming NOC
- It is recommended that National Evaluators not officiate during meets unless only a few candidates are being evaluated. Also, it is recommended that National Evaluators limit themselves to eight (8) advancement evaluations per OQM. Chief Judges may be tasked with
evaluating the Stroke and Turn team or other members of the Chief Judge team as a part of their duties

- All N3 National Evaluators on the national list will be aware of current national officiating procedures, and available for clinics, briefings, presentations, clarification of issues, and mentoring related to the art of USA Swimming officiating
- N2 and N3 advancement and recertification evaluations can only be given at approved OQMs
- Meet Referees or designee are responsible for compiling those requesting mentoring and forwarding the requests to the Evaluators, no later than 14 days in advance of the meet
- Evaluators are responsible for the final vetting of those requesting mentorship in advance of the meet for all required components and communicating with the Meet Referee regarding those not eligible

**Official Tracking System (OTS)**

- Sessions and positions worked by all officials at the meet must be entered into OTS by the Meet Referee, their designee, or the Evaluator
- Evaluators must complete the on-line OTS evaluation form for each evaluated Official using the evaluation templates
- If no evaluations are made, the Meet Referee shall ensure all evaluators mark all evaluations as complete

**Online Application Considerations and Requirements**

**Review by LSC Leadership and Evaluator**

Prior to submission of the OQM online application, all National Evaluators for the meet must review the application and meet the announcement for any discrepancies or concerns. Create an account, complete the form, opt to save for future submission, and save to desktop to share with required reviewers. Questions and issues should be resolved with the Meet Referee, LSC Officials Chair, and Evaluators.

**LSC Officials Chair Responsible Party**

The LSC Officials Chair is responsible for the submission of the application and all communication. The online form shall be submitted a minimum of 30 days prior to the meet start date. The application should be submitted on the OQM Online form and must include the final meet announcement or link. A notice of “Receipt of Application” will be sent to the applicant’s email address as soon as it is submitted.

**Meet Referee**

The Meet Referee must be a current N2 or N3 Referee. If the Meet Referee does not meet this requirement, a National Evaluator must be present for all sessions being evaluated.

**OQM Level**

LSCs have the opportunity to request the level of permitted evaluations, N2 positions only, N2 plus N3 Stroke and Turn, or N3. There are multiple considerations including National Evaluator availability, the number of sessions, the age of athletes, and the level of competition. A rubric exploring the basic requirements for each official position at a meet is available at the end of this document.

Revised July 2021
For non-LSC Championship meets this meet must be open to officials from outside of the LSC for assignment and/or evaluation.

The OQM Sub-committee will determine the highest level (N2/N3) and positions each evaluator is available to complete. It is incumbent on the Meet Referee and LSC Chair to determine which positions each evaluator is to complete and what level. For example, an N3 evaluator for Deck Referee may be present at the meet and show in the published grid. However, if the meet has only been approved for N2 advancement no N3 Deck Referee evaluations may be performed.

The National Officials Committee OQM sub-committee will make the final determination as to the meet’s OQM viability and level of evaluations permitted.

Meet Requirements
An OQM must meet the following minimum requirements.

- The meet must follow USA rules
- The meet must be sanctioned
- The Meet Referee agrees to run the meet using deck protocols approaching that expected at National Championship meets
- The National Scratch rule will be used (LSC modifications are permitted as noted in the meet rubric)
- A fully automatic timing system will be used
- A broad range of senior events in most evaluation sessions (some sessions may be age group, 13-14, sessions). LSC Age Group Championships may be exempted from the “senior” event requirement
- The meet is expected to attract and include swimmers capable of achieving qualifying times for Futures and above

Venue and Pool Description
Meets operated in multiple venues and pools are eligible for consideration for all approved sessions provided officials and assigned teams are divided equally between sites and the agreed-upon National Championship protocols are followed.

Required Sessions
For an OQM there must be a minimum of 2 days and 4 sessions meeting requirements for official observation. Not all sessions may be counted toward the minimum. The count is dependent on age group, level of competition, and events offered. The balance of sessions not counted towards an OQM, LSC Sessions, should be recorded in a second meet in OTS.

The following are eligible for OQM consideration
- Prelims and Finals except as noted in bullets below
- Timed Finals Sessions that include 13 & over 400IM and/or Relays

The following sessions are not eligible for OQM consideration.

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1 Sanction is defined as a permit issued by an LSC to a USA Swimming group member to conduct a meet in conformance with all USA Swimming rules in which all swimmers are athlete members of USA Swimming, except as provided in Article 202.5.1
2 For the purpose of this document, USA National Championship meets include Nationals, US Open, Pro Series, and Junior Nationals.
Timed Finals Sessions that **exclusively** include 1650Y/1500M, 1000Y/800M, or 500Y/400M Freestyle³

- Sessions that are exclusively for athletes aged 12 & under (see Zone exemption above)
- Time Trial sessions

**Evaluated Positions**

LSCs may request the level of evaluations to be available based on Evaluator availability. If an Evaluator determines that the meet does not fulfill the requirements for the position at the requested level, an evaluation should not be given. Below are the minimum requirements for requesting a meet and evaluations of a particular position. These are not all-inclusive. The [professional documents and evaluation templates](#) should be consulted for additional information.

Select evaluation level for the meet based on the **level of opportunities** that can be fulfilled. Recertifications will be included on the final grid.

- N2 must include opportunities for education, discussion, mentoring, and introduction of concepts
- N3 must include everything for N2 so officials may show proficiency, plus additional opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>N2</th>
<th>N3</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Minimum Deck Official Staffing Requirements | • Meet Referee  
• Admin Referee  
• Deck Referee  
• Starter  
• 2 Chief Judges on a dedicated team (may include a Team Lead CJ) *  
• Preferred Stroke officials  
• Preferred 1 start/turn official per 2 lanes | • Meet Referee  
• Admin Referee  
• Asst Admin Referee  
• 2 Deck Referees  
• 2 Starters  
• Team Lead Chief Judge  
• 2 additional Chief Judges on a dedicated team*  
• Stroke officials  
• Preferred 1 start/turn official per 2 lanes  
* A minimum of 2 CJs per pool if multiple pools are used. |

* A minimum of 2 CJs per pool if multiple pools are used. N3 meets should have no fewer than 3 CJ’s including a team lead.

**Stroke Briefing**

Provided all officials attend, a minimum of one stroke briefing must precede the meet and be observed by National Evaluator. Additional briefings may be conducted prior to sessions as deemed necessary by the Meet Referee or designee.

**Stroke and Turn**

- Demonstration of deck protocols and jurisdiction defined during Officials Briefing
- Rotation through Stroke and Turn positions,  
  Possible rotation through relief and/or reserve

³All USA National Championship meets including Futures are exempt from this requirement.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chief Judge</strong></td>
<td>• Discussing and/or demonstrating of lead-lag</td>
<td>• Possible mentoring of new officials</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of lead/lag where feasible</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion of FINA protocols</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interacting with CJ team for building team skills</td>
<td>• Team Lead has pre-meet interaction with Meet Referee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Dedicated pre- and post-session meetings with the CJ team</td>
<td>• Pre-meet CJ planning meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engaging in stroke briefing including jurisdiction, protocol, and assignments</td>
<td>• Delivering stroke briefing, jurisdiction, protocol, and assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication with the assigned team during meet operations</td>
<td>• Demonstration of deck personnel management and mentoring skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to paperwork, clearing relays, and DFS and NS procedures</td>
<td>• Defined preparation duties for sessions, i.e., gathering of needed equipment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Introduction of radio use and radio protocols</td>
<td>• Use of radios and radio protocol</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Starter</strong></td>
<td>• Demonstrating familiarity with equipment and learning how to check equipment</td>
<td>• Working with multiple Deck Referees and Starters in rotation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Interacting with Deck Referee</td>
<td>• Extending observation skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understanding of false start scenarios</td>
<td>• Backstroke ledge starts if the equipment is available</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Development of appropriate commands</td>
<td>• Invigilating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to and/or discussion of backstroke ledge starts</td>
<td>• Possible mentoring of new officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cadence refinement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Delivery of Timers Briefing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deck Referee</strong></td>
<td>• Understanding the role of Deck Referee versus Meet Referee</td>
<td>• Working with multiple Deck Referees and Starters in rotation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication and interaction with assigned team</td>
<td>• Extending observation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing observation skills</td>
<td>• Refinement of conflict resolution with deck personnel and/or coaches</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implementation of whistle protocols and pacing as defined for meet</td>
<td>• Invigilating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understanding of meet jurisdiction and protocol</td>
<td>• Radio use and protocol</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Possible mentoring of new officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to NS and DFS procedures</td>
<td>Interaction with coaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admin Referee</td>
<td>Understanding the role of Admin Referee versus Meet Referee</td>
<td>Communication and interaction with assigned team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admin Referee</td>
<td>Use of National Scratch rule (may use LSC modifications)</td>
<td>Discussion of the use of scratch procedures for prelims and finals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admin Referee</td>
<td>Understanding of timing rules and process for corrections</td>
<td>Interaction with coaches for positive check-in, scratches, and other related questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admin Referee</td>
<td>Introduction to NS and DFS procedures</td>
<td>Introduction to and discussion of Meet Manager software and timing equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin Official</td>
<td>Understanding the role of Admin Official versus Admin Referee</td>
<td>Follows guidelines set by Admin Referee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin Official</td>
<td>Similar opportunity as Admin Referee with emphasis on the flow of paperwork and timing corrections</td>
<td>Management and mentoring of an administrative team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin Official</td>
<td>Radio use and protocol</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>