

International Golf Federation (IGF) Framework for the Appointment of Classification Personnel

1. Introduction

The International Golf Federation (IGF) recognises that a fair, skilled, and ethical team of classifiers is crucial for a reliable classification system for golf athletes with a disability. Classification is the gateway to competition; its integrity underpins the trust of athletes and the legitimacy of IGF-covered competitions and their results.

In accordance with the IPC Classification Code, the IPC's International Standard for Classification Personnel and Training (both enforced in January 2025), and the IGF Classification Rules, this framework formalises the process by which the IGF appoints its Classification Personnel. This includes the process of selecting the Head of Classification, Chief Classifiers, and the assignment of individual classifiers to classification panels for IGF-sanctioned competitions.

2. Purpose and Scope

This framework provides transparent processes to help the IGF in appointing its classification personnel at all levels, including the Head of Classification, Chief Classifiers and UHC Assessors. Its purpose is to ensure that appointments are:

- based on clearly defined competencies and ethical standards,
- consistent with IPC requirements for independence and neutrality,
- informed by structured succession planning,
- and fully documented to uphold transparency and accountability.

By defining these processes, the IGF aims to protect the interests of athletes, maintain public confidence in classification, and sustain the long-term quality and diversity of the classification workforce.

3. Framework Foundations and IPC Alignment

This framework has been developed in direct alignment with the IPC Classification Code, the IGF Classification Rules, and the International Standard for the Classification of Personnel and Training. It operationalises Articles 60–63 of the IGF Classification Rules, which set out requirements for recruitment, competencies, certification, retention, and appointment of classification personnel. It also incorporates Article 7 of the IPC Code regarding classifier neutrality and panel composition, and ensures that documented published procedures are in place for selecting and appointing classifiers.

By aligning with these international standards, the IGF demonstrates its commitment to fairness, athlete-centred practice, and the ethical integrity of the classification process.

4. Appointment of the Head of Classification

The Head of Classification holds strategic responsibility for the overall quality, consistency, and governance of the IGF classification Programme. To ensure that this critical leadership position is filled transparently and by individuals with the highest levels of competence and integrity, the IGF will implement a structured appointment process.

This process will begin with an open call for applications or nominations, circulated widely to the IGF's existing classifier community, national federations, and relevant professional networks.

Eligibility criteria, as outlined in the IGF Classification Rules and IPC International Standard, will include at least two years' experience as a classifier (preferably in Golf for Athletes with a disability), demonstrable leadership in areas such as administration, policy development, research, and classifier education, and a proven record of active participation in mentoring or training classifiers.

Applications will be reviewed by the Golfers with Disabilities Committee, appointed by the IGF Executive Director, which may include senior classifiers, representatives of athletes, and governance experts to ensure balanced perspectives. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview, where their understanding of classification governance, communication skills, and commitment to the IPC Code will be assessed.

Appointments will be made for a defined term of four years, renewable following a performance review, to strike a balance between continuity and renewal.

5. Appointment of Chief Classifiers

Chief Classifiers play a pivotal role in supervising classification panels, mentoring classifiers, and ensuring consistency in the application of classification assessments. To fill these positions, the IGF will establish an appointment process that is both transparent and competency-based.

Experienced classifiers may apply or be nominated for Chief Classifier roles. Minimum requirements, as outlined in Article 60.5 of the IGF Classification Rules, will include at least two years' experience as a classifier in golf for athletes with a disability, a deep understanding of the full classification process, strong organisational and communication skills, and demonstrated ability to mentor and lead colleagues.

Candidates will be evaluated by the Head of Classification and the IGF Golfers with Disabilities Committee, who will review evidence of practical experience, feedback from peers and athletes, and the candidate's participation in education or research activities. Appointments will be made for fixed terms of four years, with renewal contingent on performance, training participation, and ongoing adherence to ethical standards.

6. Appointment of Classifiers to Individual Panels and Panel Assignment Procedures

The assignment of classifiers to specific competition panels requires special attention to neutrality, competence, and operational needs. For each IGF Covered Competition or Out of Competition Classification opportunities, the Head of Classification, in collaboration with Chief Classifiers, will assemble classification panels from the pool of certified classifiers.

Panels will be composed in accordance with IPC rules, generally requiring a minimum of two classifiers and, wherever feasible, representing different nationalities.

In assigning classifiers, consideration will be given to their:

- certification scope (e.g., impairment type),
- professional background (medical or technical),
- language skills, and
- experience.
- Classifiers will also be screened for potential conflicts of interest, such as coaching relationships, personal connections with athletes, or recent involvement with national teams.

Prior to the conclusion of each calendar year, all IGF Classifiers and Classifier trainees will be invited to submit their availability for all known IGF-sanctioned events requiring classification panels. The Head of Classification will ordinarily assign two classification panels to each IGF Covered Competition, ensuring appropriate representation of medical and technical expertise, neutrality, and balance in panel composition.

In exceptional circumstances, such as unexpected illness or travel disruption, the IGF may approve temporary deviations, including single-classifier panels or classifiers sharing nationality with an athlete, in accordance with IPC Code Article 7.3. In these cases, athletes will be assigned Review status (R-NAO: Review at Next Available Opportunity) to protect the fairness of competition.

Every panel appointment will be documented, including the rationale and confirmation that classifiers declared any conflicts of interest. This ensures accountability and transparency in line with IPC best practice.

7. Appointment of UHC Assessors

UHC Assessors perform specialised roles in verifying athletes' underlying health conditions, often before functional assessment. The IGF will identify qualified medical professionals with expertise in conditions relevant to golf for athletes with a disability, such as neurologists, orthopaedic specialists, ophthalmologists, and psychologists.

Candidates will be evaluated by the Head of Classification and the Chief Classifier, and appointments will follow an open and competency-based process, ensuring candidates meet requirements defined in Article 60.1 of the IGF Classification Rules: including the ability to interpret complex medical documents, familiarity with the IPC Code and IGF Classification Rules, and the ability to produce clear written assessments. Appointments will be made for fixed terms of four years, with renewal contingent on performance, training participation, and ongoing adherence to ethical standards.

All UHC Assessors will receive training in the IGF Classification Personnel Code of Conduct, safeguarding protocols, and data protection, and must formally declare any conflicts of interest.

8. Succession Planning and Renewal

Sustaining classifier quality and neutrality over time requires intentional succession planning. The IGF will promote mentoring relationships, in which experienced classifiers guide trainees and early-career classifiers, building a future pool of Chief Classifiers and potential Heads of Classification. In line with the provisions outlined in the Strategy for Identifying Prospective Trainee Classifiers, recruitment and development pathways will ensure that candidates are selected transparently and supported to meet the highest standards.

Regular performance appraisals, led by the Head of Classification, will inform decisions about re-appointment or promotion. The IGF will consider classifiers' commitment to ongoing professional development, their contributions to research or education, and feedback from athletes and peers.

Fixed-term appointments for senior roles will strike a balance between continuity and the opportunity for new talent to emerge, thereby supporting diversity and adaptability.

9. Conflict of Interest Management

Consistent with the IPC Classification Code and International Standard, the IGF will require all classification personnel to disclose any actual, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest. The Head of Classification and the IGF Head of Integrity will assess these disclosures and, where necessary, reassign classifiers to ensure panels remain impartial.

Conflicts may include recent coaching roles, family connections, or employment that could compromise neutrality. All conflicts and management decisions will be recorded transparently.

10. Documentation and Transparency

The IGF will document every appointment decision and maintain a Classification Master List detailing classifiers' scope of certification, experience, and panel assignments. Selection criteria and appointment procedures will be published on the IGF website, ensuring athletes, federations, and the public understand how classifiers are chosen.

This approach operationalises IPC requirements for transparency and aligns with the values of athlete-centred governance.

11. Conclusion

This framework reflects the IGF's commitment to developing a world-class classification system, underpinned by transparency, neutrality, and international best practices. Through rigorous appointment processes, the IGF ensures that every athlete is evaluated by qualified and impartial personnel. This approach will support both fairness in competition and the professional development of a diverse and trusted classification workforce.