

A GUIDE TO PARA ATHLETICS CLASSIFICATION

WHAT IS CLASSIFICATION?

Classification is the process of grouping athletes together that have similar impairments, ensuring that success is determined by hard work and talent.
Classification makes competitions fair for disabled athletes.



WHY SHOULD ATHLETES BE CLASSIFIED?

Athletes are classified when they show potential for competing at high national or international level. While all athletes can compete at club events and open races, classification is required to compete at some events held by UK Athletics and at a higher level.

HOW ARE ATHLETES CLASSIFIED?

Athletes hoping to be classified must be at least 11 years old and have been training with a club for 3 months. An athlete, parent, club, or coach should contact **scottishathletics** to start the process. Athletes in each impairment type go through different processes to get classified, these are listed below:

Physical Impairments	Intellectual Impairments	Visual Impairments
Provide medical documents confirming their impairment.	Medical or educational documents must be provided, confirming impairment.	Athletes provide medical documentation of impairment.
↓	↓	↓
A physical examination is carried out.	Athletes are required to take an IQ test and an adaptability test. <i>(UKA requires athletes to undergo the same test to ensure fair and accurate scores).</i>	Athletes are examined by an ophthalmologist.
↓	↓	↓
Athletes are observed in competition.	Athletes coaches then complete a TSAL (Training History & Sport Activity Limitations Inventory) report.	Athletes are then observed in competition.

WHO CLASSIFIES?

National classifiers have either a medical or technical background and work in pairs, with at least one having a medical background. Medical classifiers are qualified health professionals (i.e. a doctor, an optometrist or a psychologist).

A UK classification *does not* mean that an athlete can compete internationally, there are separate applications to go through for international classification.

IMPAIRMENT CLASSES

In para-athletics, there are 10 impairment classes that athletes can be grouped into, they are as follows:

8 physical impairment groups 1 visual impairment group 1 intellectual impairment group

Track is prefixed with T, field is prefixed with F.

Impairment	Requirements	Track classes	Field classes
Visual	Have an impairment in both eyes and a severe restricted view.	T11-13	F11-13
Intellectual	Have an IQ of less than 75 and limitations in everyday skills.	T20	F20
Hypertonia	Reduction in the body's ability to stretch due to increased muscle tension.	T35-38 T32-34	F35-38 F31-34
Athetosis	Co-ordination issues caused by damage to the central nervous system.	T35-38 T32-34	F35-38 F31-34
Ataxia	Involuntary movements caused by damage to the central nervous system.	T35-38 T32-34	F35-38 F31-34
Limb deficiency	Total or partial absence of bones or joints in upper and lower extremities.	T42-44 T45-47 T61-64 T51-54	F42-44 F45-46 F61-64 F51-57
Leg length difference	A minimum of 7cm length difference in one leg.	T42-44 T61-64 T51-54	F42-44 F61-64 F51-57
Short stature	Standing height and limb length are reduced.		F41-41
Impaired passive range of movements	Movement in at least one joint is permanently reduced.	T42-44 T45-47 T51-54	F42-44 F45-46 F51-57
Impaired muscle power	Muscles in limbs or trunk are partially or completely paralysed.	T42-44 T45-47 T51-54	F42-44 F45-46 F51-57

Within para-athletics a lower number within a class, means the more the severe the impairment is, for example, T11 athletes will have less vision compared to a T13 athlete.

MINIMUM IMPAIRMENT CRITERIA

Athletes that wish to be classified must meet the Minimum Impairment Criteria (MIC) for their impairment type. The MIC details how severe an athlete's impairment must be for them to be classified, for example, athletes in the ataxia impairment type must undergo specific tests to prove their lack of coordination.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

For athletes that are not on the Paralympic pathway, there are alternative options:

- Athletes who have a hearing impairment compete at the Deaflympics.
- There are national competitions held by Scottish Disability Sport that do not require classification.
- Athletes who have an intellectual impairment but do not meet the standards for high performance or those who have an IQ over 75, can compete in the Summer and Winter Special Olympics. Whilst athletes hoping to go the Paralympic games must have a classification, athletes at the Special Olympics only need a note from a professional, such as a teacher.



Useful Links:

- **UK Athletics-** <https://www.uka.org.uk/performance/paralympic-performance-pathway/national-classification/>
- **World Paralympic Athletics** <https://www.paralympic.org/athletics/classification>
- **Lexi Classification** <https://lexi.global/sports/athletics/>
- **Special Olympics** <https://www.specialolympics.org/>
- **Scottish Athletics** [Home - Scottish Athletics](#)
- **Paralympics GB Video** [ParalympicsGB Classification Explainer - YouTube](#)
- **Scottish Disability Sport** <https://www.scottishdisabilitysport.com>
- **Forth Valley Flyers** <http://www.forthvalleyflyers.org.uk/>

Pictures belong to **scottishathletics** by Bobby Gavin and from Jo Butterfield.

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