

Para-Equestrian 2018

National Classification Policy



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Key:

FEI: Federation Equestre Internationale

BD: British Dressage

BEF: British Equestrian Federation

RDA: Riding for the Disabled Association

NCP: National Classifying Panel

1. Introduction

The National Para-Equestrian Classification Guide has been developed in compliance with the FEI Classification Manual (Fifth Edition 2017) and was implemented in full on 1 January 2015.

This updated policy will come into effect on 1 February 2018.

Classification has two important roles:

- To determine eligibility to compete as a para-equestrian athlete
- To profile athletes for competition in the appropriate corresponding Grade.

To be eligible for Classification, an athlete must have more than 15% loss of power, range or coordination in any limb or the trunk (see base line scores FEI Classification Manual Fifth Edition 2017).

An athlete must have a recognised medical condition that causes impairment which can be measured objectively in compliance with the FEI Classification Manual (Fifth Edition 2017).

- Classification ensures that athletes compete equitably with other para-equestrian athletes.
- Classification provides a structure for competition
- Classification is undertaken to ensure that an athlete's impairment is relevant to performance on the horse
- Classification aims to put athletes into classes or grades according to how much their impairment impacts on the core determinants of success in the sport.

The purpose of the para-equestrian Classification is also to minimise the impact of impairment on the outcome of the competition, so that an athlete's success in competition relies on training and personal equestrian skill. Classification is an on-going process whereby all athletes are under regular observation by classifiers to ensure consistency and fairness for all athletes.

2. Eligible criteria

2a. Eligible impairment types

A brief description of the eligible impairment types:

Impaired muscle power: Reduced force generated by muscles or muscle groups, such as muscles of one limb or the lower half of the body, as caused, for example, by spinal cord injuries, spina bifida or polio.

Impaired passive range of movement: Range of movement in one or more joints is reduced permanently, for example due to arthrogryposis.

Hypermobility of joints, joint instability and acute conditions, such as arthritis, are not considered eligible impairments.

Limb deficiency: Total or partial absence of bones or joints as a consequence of trauma (e.g. car accident), illness (e.g. bone cancer) or congenital limb deficiency (e.g. dysmelia).

Leg length difference: Bone shortening in one leg due to congenital deficiency or trauma.

Short stature: Reduced standing height due to abnormal dimensions of bones of upper and lower limbs or trunk. For example, due to achondroplasia or growth hormone dysfunction.

Hypertonia: Abnormal increase in muscle tension and a reduced ability of a muscle to stretch due to a neurological condition, such as cerebral palsy, brain injury or multiple sclerosis.

Ataxia: Lack of co-ordination of muscle movements due to a neurological condition, such as cerebral palsy, brain injury or multiple sclerosis.

Athetosis: Generally characterised by unbalanced, involuntary movements and a difficulty in maintaining a symmetrical posture due to a neurological condition, such as cerebral palsy, brain injury or multiple sclerosis.

Visual impairment: Vision is impacted by either an impairment of the eye structure, optical nerves or optical pathways, or the visual cortex.

The Paralympic Movement adopted the definitions for the eligible impairment types as described in the World Health Organization International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (2001, World Health Organization, Geneva).

The FEI eligibility criteria (FEI Classification Manual Fifth Edition 2017) define how an athlete may be considered eligible to compete. The criteria are based on the specific functions which are required to compete equitably with other athletes with a disability.

It is possible that an athlete may have an impairment which is perceived to cause some interference to their performance on the horse but does not fall within the criteria recorded in the FEI Classification Manual (Fifth Edition 2017). It is recommended if the impairment does not fit clearly into one of the impairment groups mentioned in 2c, that the athlete contacts a National Classifier as recommended by the National Classification Coordinator at BEF to obtain guidance on the criteria before the athlete seeks classification.

2b. Classification groups

Currently under National Classification Policy and FEI Rules Profiles 1 – 31 & 36 – 37a are eligible to compete within the Five Grades of Para-Equestrian Dressage: Grade I, Grade II, Grade III, Grade IV & Grade V.

2c. Impairment groups

- Neurological - impairments with either central or peripheral damage, either congenital or acquired - which include:
 - Spasticity
 - Athetosis
 - Ataxia
 - Mixed - spasticity/athetosis/ataxia/dystonia
 - Peripheral nerve damage
 - Impaired muscle power.
- Locomotor - which include:
 - Amputations
 - Limb deficiency and limb length difference
 - Impaired muscle power
 - Impaired passive joint range of motion
 - Multiple impairments that lead to a permanent and verifiable activity limitation
 - Spinal cord lesions - complete or incomplete.
- Visual impairments: These are classified by ophthalmologist and details are available from British Blind Sport.

2d. Other profiles

Profile 29 and 30: Both profiles are not individually eligible in para-equestrian dressage and those two profiles are only eligible in combination with another profile.

Profile 39: This profile (Intellectual Impairments) is classified by an approved psychologist. Currently under FEI Rules, an athlete with intellectual disabilities who does not have a physical classification is covered under Profile 39 of the Classification Guide (applicable to Grade III). This profile remains inactive at present so athletes in Profile 39 are not eligible to compete in Para-Equestrian Dressage competition run under FEI rules but are eligible to compete in RDA National Classes.

Profile 42: This profile is for health conditions that are difficult to measure or grade and are therefore **ineligible** – a list of ineligible conditions is detailed below:

- Wear and tear on the joints due to advancing age
- General debilitating disease
- Obesity
- Osteochondritis
- Impairments of mental functions
- Skin diseases
- Sleep related movement disorders
- Hypermobility of joints
- Low muscle tone or hypotonia
- Haemophilia
- Epilepsy
- Respiratory conditions
- Fatigue as in fibromyalgia and myalgic encephalitis
- Vertigo or dizziness
- Internal organ dysfunction or absence
- IBSA class B3 and B4
- Cardiac/circulatory conditions
- Hearing impairment
- Pain
- Reflex sympathetic Dystrophy or Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CPRS) without permanent joint impairment and severe muscle wasting.

Profile 48: This profile is for able-bodied and riders are not eligible to compete in para-equestrian competitions.

3. Athlete evaluation

3a. Registering for Classification

Athletes must register for classification with BEF and complete the registration form and submit a certificate that states their full medical diagnosis relevant to the classification a minimum of six weeks prior to the classification date. Failure to supply this information will result in a delay in a classification date being arranged. Registration and medical forms can be downloaded from the [BEF webpage](#).

Please note: you must be in your 13th year of age or above to be eligible for classification.

Once the required documentation has been submitted to BEF the following procedure for registration to be classified will be followed:

- Stage 1: The NCP will review the submitted registration and medical forms submitted by the athlete.
- Stage 2: If the NCP determines that the medical evidence submitted is sufficient and that the applicant is eligible, as defined in the FEI Classification Manual Fifth edition 2017, the rider will then proceed to Stage 3 of the classification registration process.
- Stage 3: The athlete will be given the contact details of a classifier in their region and a date and venue for physical assessment will be arranged. Full payment must be made for the physical assessment before a date is allocated.

NB. No athlete will be put forward for Stage 3 (physical assessment) until Stages 1 & 2 of the process listed above has been completed. Due to the varying nature of disabilities, the NCP may at its sole discretion determine that a second opinion is required and direct that Stage 3 of the classification as listed above shall be conducted by two National Classifiers. In this case, BEF will allocate an athlete a place at a Regional Classification Day.

Riders applying for *International Classification* need to be a member of either RDA or BD. For further information about the International Classification process, please contact the British Dressage Para Officer.

3b. Presentation at classification

Athletes should attend the appointed classification on the date and time arranged. Failure to do so without contacting National Classification Coordinator at BEF or the National Classifier concerned may result in a classification not being re-scheduled for a period of **more than six months**.

Athletes are advised to bring a list of any medication with dosage and must bring photographic ID (i.e. driver license, passport).

3c. Informed consent

Athletes must sign a Classification Informed Consent Form to indicate their willingness to be classified and confirm their agreement to provide full effort and co-operation throughout the classification process. This form can be downloaded from the [BEF webpage](#). Athletes must read and sign the document prior to being allocated a date for classification to acknowledge they understand the document and give their consent.

3d. Classification procedure

The procedure and physical testing will be carried out in accordance with the FEI Classification Manual (Fifth Edition 2017).

Classification shall be carried out in a courteous and professional manner, with appropriate testing only. During the classification, only the necessary personnel shall be present: the athlete and one other, who shall be another person requested by the rider to act as their representative.

The rider's representative shall not speak during the classification process unless directly addressed, or unless an objection is made to preserve the dignity of the rider. The rider has a right to terminate the classification process at any time, for a valid reason.

All athletes should be encouraged to be as able as possible, and to this end prostheses/orthosis should be worn that are used for riding.

Athletes could be observed riding and during social occasions following their classification; this is to confirm the performance in the bench tests, not to assess the skill of the rider. The athlete may be videotaped and/or photographed during any part of the Athlete Evaluation process and may include the athlete's activity on and off the field of play during the event. Pre-existing video and/or records may also be used by the National Classification Panel to inform the Athlete Evaluation.

4. Notification of classification grade

After the athlete has completed their classification in the discipline he/she will be notified in writing of the final decision of the NCP. The NCP will assign the athlete a Classification based on the FEI profiles. No feedback will be given on the day of the classification.

4a. Classification status

There are three National Classification statuses:

- **REVIEW (R):** This status indicates an athlete who has undergone classification and has obtained a Grade for National Competition, but may require further evaluation according to the Classification Rules of the FEI
- **CONFIRMED (C):** This status indicates an athlete who has undergone classification and has obtained a Grade for National Competition, and does not require further evaluation according to the Classification Rules of the FEI
- **NOT ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE (NE):** Athletes who are found to be not eligible to compete may request to be seen by a second panel. If the second panel finds the athlete NE the decision will be final and not open to protest or appeal. If the medical classifiers find the athlete does not meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Classification Rules the classification assessment will stop immediately and the NCP will be notified.

4b. Failure to cooperate or complete the classification process or intentional misrepresentation of skills and/or abilities

Athletes who fail to cooperate with classifiers or fail to complete the classification process will not be allocated a profile and therefore, will not be eligible to compete in RDA Qualifiers/Championships or BD para-equestrian competitions.

An athlete who, in the opinion of the Classification Panel, is intentionally misrepresenting skills and/or abilities shall be considered to be in violation of the Classification Process and:

- If the Classification Panel decides that the athlete is not cooperating or the athlete to be misrepresenting his/her skills or abilities, it will provide the athlete with one verbal warning to that effect, including the consequences of non-cooperation and/or misrepresentation
- If the Classification Panel considers that the athlete continues to be uncooperative or to be misrepresenting his/her skills or abilities, it will stop

classification and the NCP will notify British Equestrian Federation. The athlete will not be permitted to undergo any further evaluation for para-equestrian for a minimum of six months starting from the date upon which the athlete failed to cooperate or intentionally misrepresented skills and/or abilities.

4c. Exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances arise when NCP at its sole discretion decides that an athlete demonstrates significantly less or greater ability prior to or during competition, which does not reflect the athlete's current Grade.

Exceptional circumstances may result from:

- A change in the degree of impairment of an athlete
- An athlete demonstrating significantly less or greater ability prior to or during competition which does not reflect the athlete's current Grade
- An error made by a Classification Panel which has led to the athlete being allocated a Profile which is not in keeping with the athlete's ability
- Profile criteria having changed since the athlete's most recent evaluation.

In such cases, the NCP has the right to suspend the classification of the athlete until the athlete has been re-evaluated by the NCP.

5. Appeals procedure

Appeals process and procedures:

Athletes have the right to appeal against a decision of the NCP either as to their eligibility to compete as a para-equestrian athlete or their Classification Grade, or Status on the grounds that either the NCP has failed to comply with this policy or that the NCP has made a decision that no rational body of competent classifiers could have made. Appeals must be made in writing within [48] hours of the decision. Appeals must be sent to the BEF. If the BEF is not able to satisfy the appellant's concerns the appeal will then follow the BEF Appeals Process; the process and procedures for which are laid out in the BEF Rule Book which can be obtained either from the BEF office or at www.bef.co.uk

The BEF reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time. The amended policy will be published on the British Equestrian Federation, British Showjumping, [British Dressage](#) and [Riding for the Disabled Association](#) websites and will come into force 10 days after such publication.

6. Appendix : Process of Classification

Please see refer to [National Classification Process: What to Expect.](#)