



American Swimming Coaches Association

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LEADERSHIP | EDUCATION | CERTIFICATION

COACHES CERTIFICATION Purpose and the Process

Why Be Certified?

Certification means that you are serious about your profession of coaching swimming. It means that you care about your continuing coaching education and your professional preparation. It marks you as a coach who is in the mainstream of world coaching, and willing to be examined and "Certified" by an independent agency (The ASCA), in the same light as the great coaches of history, whether Collegiate, USA-Swimming, High School, YMCA, or Masters, as well as thousands of international coaches who chose our ASCA Certification system to document their credentials (from 49 nations, at this writing) Employers know that the ASCA Certified Coach is committed to Professional Performance, has Professional Preparation, and, importantly, Professional Ethics through their membership in ASCA.

Certification gives you a title you have Earned . . . "Coach John Doe, ASCA Certified Level 2 Age Group Coach" (or similar for all swimming organizations).

Certification also states your credentials precisely and concisely. It represents your education in the sport, your experience in the sport, and your ability to produce athletes who perform at a high level. (Once you are doing so.) Certification is a VOLUNTARY process. Some coaches chose NOT to participate, and frankly, they are then sometimes part of the "Creative Resume Writing" group that stains our sport with inaccuracies and false information. Certification does not pretend to say who is the "better coach." What Certification does, is accurately represent your credentials from an independent agency. Employers, over the 27 year history of ASCA Certification, have become quite adept at differentiating between Resume Writing Coaches and ASCA Certified Coaches. ASCA Certification provides Factual Information to your potential employer.

How To Be Certified?

- #1 Become a member of the American Swimming Coaches Association. Sign and return the Code of Ethics that you agree to abide by. You can do this online at www.swimmingcoach.org or on the phone at 1 (800) 356-2722. Or via the paper application, returned with payment.
- #2 Complete the Certification Application itself, that is enclosed within this form and mail to the ASCA Address. Give us the most complete possible information. We can't give you credit for things you don't list!
- #3 Complete the Required Certification Schools. First, Level 1 Foundations of Coaching. Second, The Stroke School – The Construction and Correction of Swimming Strokes. Third, the Physiology School, the Planning and Execution of Training. Level 4 – The Leadership School – Every Coach Must Be A Leader. And 5, the Administration School . . . Running Your Program Effectively. Each school is available in both live clinic form and in home study. Some are available on line. (Levels 1-2 as of this writing.)

Send the original tests to the ASCA at 5101 NW 21st Ave, Suite 530, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309. Tests will be scored, and processed to your file. You will then receive a letter and a Certificate for your course, with your current Level and type. (Which you supply us with the Certification Application) You will be notified of the number of educational units that you have been awarded as a result of this test. In some unusual and specific cases, some required courses may be waived due to specific educational achievements or experiences. This is a rare event.

What is Evaluated in Certification?

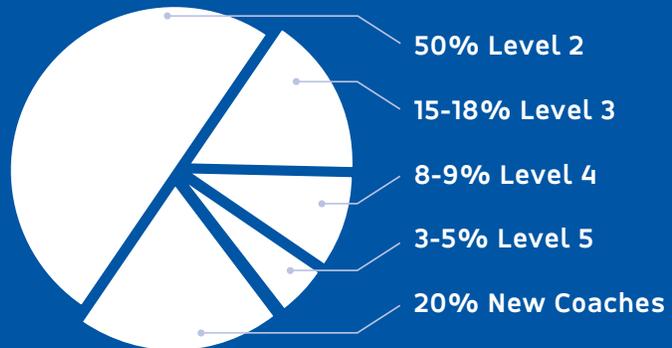
There are three things evaluated in the Certification Process. They are: Education, Experience and Achievement. Your Certification shows that you have met the requirements for each category at the level at which you have been placed.

It is your responsibility to provide us with “updates” on each of these categories to add “units” of either education or experience, or new achievements to be added to your record. The easiest way to do this is through email directly to our Certification Desk. (Certification@swimmingcoach.org)

When you attend a clinic, take a course, have an athlete reach a new achievement level, you notify us and communicate with you from there to complete and update your record. We send you appropriate letters (which you should save in your personal certification file) to verify what you have sent to us.

The National Picture:

Close to 13,000 coaches have been Certified by the ASCA. Of these, only 3-5% are Level 5 in any category, an additional 8-9% are Level 4, 15-18% are Level 3, and roughly 50% are Level 2, with the new coaches making up approximately 20% of the Certified Coach population at any given time.



The Components of Certification A Deeper Explanation

EDUCATION

Coaching is both an art and a science. Recognizing that, you'll earn units for virtually any education that you have taken. You naturally receive more units of education credit for “coaching relevant” materials than other . . . (Example, a college major in Physical Education is worth 40 units. A major in elementary education is worth 20 units and a major in Etruscan Art is worth 3 units.) Academic education information is sought on your Certification application. List all your academic education, please, as all will receive some credit.

Coaching Clinic education is the next category. All coaching clinics that are known to us are evaluated based on content, and quality of speakers and awarded a “Unit Value” of perhaps 15 units for a major regional clinic (of which there are about 10 in the USA each year) to a lower number for small local clinics. But again All clinic education will earn you some education credits. You email us about your attendance at such and we compare it to the list provided to us by the Clinic organizers, to validate your participation. We do not test clinic education, you simply notify us of your presence. Clinics from other sports can also be credited, but again, at a lower level of relevancy than swim clinics.

You will also be educated by reading books, watching videos, etc. You can receive credit for this sort of “self-education” by simply sending us an email with between 5-10 ideas that you got from each source. **We urge all coaches to get their coaching education from a variety of sources for the most well rounded possible coach education.** ASCA Enrichment Courses also typically provide 12 units of education per course and 26 such courses exist. You report results either by providing a test if it comes with the course, or an email as above if no test is provided. Again, tested education provides more education units than untested educational efforts.

The American Swimming Coaches Association's Annual World Clinic provides 40 units of Education and is the “Apex Event” in the education area of Certification.

EXPERIENCE

You must document your coaching experience. You receive unit credit for volunteer coaching, assistant coaching or head coaching. List all positions, how long you were there, and your primary supervisor if any. You will receive 1 unit for each year of assistant or intern coaching, 3 units for each year of head coaching. (Once past 10 years in the same place, you earn 2 units per year.) When in doubt, list it!

Your experience allows you to use your coaching tool's to maximum advantage and is therefore, vital to your professional preparation.

ACHIEVEMENT

In order to be Certified at Levels 3, 4 or 5, you must have coached an athlete who achieved one of the standards listed under each level below. You need only ONE of the listed qualifications at each level. Make note that you must be the PRIMARY COACH of this athlete in order to claim credit. The primary coach plans and executes 90% of an athletes training. Any coach, to be credited with that athlete, must have coached that athlete for 12 months prior to the attainment of the relevant criteria. You need to submit proof of achievement as well as proof (or a statement of such if you are the Head Coach) that you were the primary coach of the athlete. Assistant coaches, under certain conditions, certainly can be "primary coaches" of record. Be aware that we thoroughly and carefully analyze and protect the integrity of the system by examining all "primary coach" claims that are provided. Professional integrity is very important here.

Note, that, as in all things "Certification," feel free to state your case in a letter to our office, if you think you have a "special circumstance."

ACHIEVEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Level 5 – (one of) ON USA SWIMMING INTERNATIONAL COACHES LIST. 40 High School All-Americans, 40 Prep School All-Americans, 20 YMCA All-Americans plus 3 National Champions, 20 NAIA All-Americans plus 3 NC's, 20 NCAA D III All-Americans plus 3 NC's, 20 NCAA II All-Americans plus 3 NC's, 20 NCAA Division I All-Americans plus 3 NC's, 40 Individuals with top 10 national age group rankings, plus 3 Top Ten National Champions.

Level 4 – (one of) Individual USA-Swimming National Championship Qualifier – (Summer cuts only), 10 High School or Prep School All-Americans, 5 YMCA All-Americans, 5 NAIA All-Americans, 5 NCAA I, II or III All-Americans, 20 Individuals with USA-Swimming National Age Group Top Ten Times, 20 YMCA individuals with National Age Group top Ten rankings.

Level 3 – (one of) High School or Prep School All-American. USA-Swimming Junior National Qualifier, National or YMCA Age Group top ten swimmer, NCAA I, II or III individual qualifier.

Level 2 – No Achievement Requirements, does require 6 months of coaching experience and Levels 1-2 Schools completed.

Level 1 – Completion of Level 1- Foundations of Coaching Course.

ACCESS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENTAL COACHES TO THE UPPER LEVELS OF CERTIFICATION (EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE)

Career Developmental Coaches are among the most important coaches in our country. A Career developmental coach is one who has spent 10 year or more in a multi-level program, where they are NOT the head coach, and they are NOT responsible for "fast swimming". They develop an athlete and then pass them along to the next coach in the system. Under certain conditions, we want to recognize these coaches. Those conditions are:

1. You must have been actively coaching for a full ten years (120 months).
2. All of that time must have been spent in a multi-level system, where your job was not to create fast swimming, but good developmental work.
3. Your Head Coach must support your application with a letter supporting those facts.
4. You must have taken Education Courses through ASCA Level 3 or 4 as appropriate.
5. A Level 4 developmental coach must accrue 15 years in position.
6. A Level 4 developmental coach must have taken all required course work through Level 5.
7. There is no "Level 5" availability for Developmental Coaches or "Education and Experience" coaches.

ATTAINING HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS 3-4 (NISCA)

1. Meet all requirements of Level 3 without achievement.
2. Academic Degree from a four year institution.
3. Demonstrate 5 years service to the community through Learn to Swim, Aquatic Directorship, etc. A minimum of 10 years of high school coaching to be eligible.
4. Membership in NISCA (and ASCA).
5. Level 4 – same as above, but 15 years of High School coaching required.

What Comes Back from the ASCA Office After I Submit My Certification Paperwork?

- A letter stating what you have received in Unit Credit and Certification Level.
- Each time you submit an update/Upgrade, you'll get a letter back.
- A Certificate suitable for framing, of your Level and Category.
- We urge you to save copies of all you send to us, in a personal file.
Save all the letters we return to you as well.

We do handle thousands of pieces of paper and electronic communications each month and we do make mistakes, no matter how hard we try not to. Back us up with your copies.

Fees

You pay no fee to be Certified. It is part of the service you receive with your membership. You do pay for education, as you do in every other part of American life.

What is the Process of Updating, Upgrading?

An update of your education (clinics, books read, videos, etc.) is as simple as an email to our Certification office . . . Certification@swimmingcoach.org.

You'll get a letter back telling you that we have processed it, and how many units you have been awarded.

Upgrading requires a quick form completed that is available on the ASCA website www.swimmingcoach.org and with it, submission of proof of achievement and proof of your being the primary coach. Remember, tell us in your submission what LEVEL you seek to upgrade to, and in what category . . . USA Swimming Senior, Age Group, YMCA, NCAA Division I or II or III; etc.

“The ASCA Certification Program has a limited amount of flexibility built into it. If you feel that the forms submitted do not effectively represent a certain part of your Coaching credentials, we invite you to send an accompanying letter and ‘state your case.’ We’re happy to work with everyone to create an accurate representation of your professional development and accomplishment.”

— John Leonard, ASCA Executive Director

ASCA COACHES CERTIFICATION IN COOPERATION WITH:

College Swimming Coaches Association of American
YMCA
Masters Swimming

NISCA
USA Swimming
World Swimming Coaches Association



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