



# Applying for Adaptive Classification

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to Athletes applying for Classification; the process, what you will need and what to expect.



British Rowing adopts the FISA Para-Rowing system of classification which places rowers into classes according to how much their impairment impacts rowing.

These internationally recognised classes are:

**LTA-PD** – Legs, Trunk and Arms (Physical Disability)

**LTA-VI** – Legs Trunks and Arms (Visual Impairment)

**TA** – Trunk and Arms

**AS** – Arms and Shoulders

Rowers who do not meet the British Rowing classification criteria may be eligible for a Rowability Grouping. These classes are accepted at events that offer Rowability events:

**RSS-PD** – Rowability Sliding Seat (Physical Disability)

**RSS-LD** – Rowability Sliding Seat (Learning Disability)

**RFS** – Rowability Fixed Seat

**RUS** – Rowability Upright Seat

A Rowability classified rower can race in the corresponding Rowability Grouping, but a Rowability rower cannot race as a British Rowing classified Para-Rower.



# Pre-requisites for Classification

Athletes seeking to be classified as a Para-Rower, or Rowability must present to the classification panel:

- A completed Medical Declaration Application Form
- A signed letter or documentation from a Medical Doctor confirming a clear medical diagnosis of the physical disability, the date of injury, and the functional effect the injury has on the rower.
- Rowers with Visual Impairment must provide proof of prior International Blind Sports Association (IBSA) classification with a sport class, or have their Ophthalmologist/Optometrist complete the Vision Qualification Form.

For rowers with a Visual Impairment, the British Rowing Head of Classification will review all paperwork. A functional assessment is not required.

All Paperwork should be submitted to the Head of Classification two months prior to a classification opportunity.

# What health conditions are eligible for Classification in Para-Rowing?

Eligibility is determined through evidence of a health impairment which has resulted in a **permanent and verifiable activity limitation**. This must be supported by medical documentation signed and dated by a medical doctor.

Impairment	Examples of health conditions			
<b>Vision Impairment</b>		Albanism, Retinitis Pigmentosa, macular or rod cone dystrophy		
<b>Physical Impairment</b>	Limb loss or deficiency	Amputation from trauma, cancer, Limb deficiency from birth		
	Loss of muscle strength	Spinal cord injury, Spina Bifida, Transverse Myelitis, Sacral Agenesis, Spinal Tumours, Erbs Palsy, Muscular dystrophy		
	Hypertonia Ataxia Athetosis	Cerebral palsy, acquired brain injury, stroke, brain tumour, Multiple sclerosis, cerebellar ataxia, Hereditary Spastic Paraparesis or other conditions where hypertonia (spasticity, rigidity or dystonia), ataxia or athetosis are present		
	Joint movement restrictions	Arthrogryposis, Talipes Equinovarus, joint fusions		

# What is the Minimal Disability Criteria?

Specific criteria applied for Para-Rowing to determine if a person's disability results in sufficient limitation to be eligible. This is called the **minimal disability criteria**.

Permanent and Verifiable Impairment Type	Examples of health conditions (diagnosis) likely to cause such impairment	
Vision Impairment	Visual acuity less than or equal to 6/60 (log MAR 1.0); or visual field is less than 20 degrees radius in both eyes with best corrected vision.	
Physical Impairment	<b>Limb loss or deficiency</b>	<b>Leg:</b> Loss of half of one foot <b>Arm:</b> Full loss of three fingers in one hand.
	<b>Loss of muscle strength</b>	<b>Leg:</b> Loss of strength in a hip, knee or ankle that impacts on rowing. <b>Arm:</b> Loss of strength in a shoulder, elbow, wrist or fingers that impacts on rowing.
	<b>Hypertonia</b> <b>Ataxia</b> <b>Athetosis</b>	Hypertonia (Spasticity, Rigidity or Dystonia), Ataxia or Athetosis that affect coordination in at least one joint.
	<b>Joint movement restrictions</b>	<b>Leg:</b> Joint movement restriction in one hip, knee or ankle that impacts on rowing. <b>Arm:</b> Joint movement restriction in one shoulder, elbow, wrist or fingers that impacts on rowing.

# What are the Para-Rowing classes?

The list below is intended as a guide only. Only authorised classifiers are able to provide a formal classification.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>LTA (Legs Trunk Arms)</b>	<p>Rowers who have the use of their legs, trunk and arms, who can utilise the sliding seat. Rowers may have a physical or visual impairment, Rowers with a visual impairment wear a blindfold during competition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limb loss or deficiency, at least full loss of three fingers on one hand, or at least a tarsal metatarsal amputation of the foot</li> <li>• Loss of muscle strength e.g. equivalent to incomplete spinal cord injury at S1</li> <li>• Minimal ataxia, athetosis, hypertonia. E.g. cerebral palsy, brain injury, stroke or multiple sclerosis</li> </ul>
<b>TA (Trunk Arms)</b>	<p>Rowers who have trunk and arm movement, who are unable to use their legs to propel the sliding seat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limb loss or deficiency equivalent to a double above leg amputation</li> <li>• Significant muscle strength loss in both legs equivalent to complete spinal cord injury at L3 level or incomplete lesion at L1</li> <li>• Ataxia, athetosis or hypertonia from CP, brain injury or stroke which affects both legs or one side of the body</li> </ul>



<b>AS (Arms Shoulders)</b>	Athletes row with their arms and shoulders only. Athletes use strapping around their trunk and legs to provide support and stability in the boat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ataxia, athetosis or hypertonia from CP, brain injury or stroke who may use a wheelchair or walking aid</li><li>• Loss of muscle strength equivalent to complete spinal cord injury at T12 level</li></ul>
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## What if my impairment does not fall into the above categories?

## Rowability

Where your impairment does not fall into the FISA classification categories, provided that you meet a minimal disability through a loss of points, you may be eligible for a 'Rowability Grouping'. This is a British Rowing categorisation to enable athletes who are not eligible for FISA LTA, TA or AS to be classified in a different set of categories:

**Rowability Sliding Seat (RSS)**  
**Rowability Fixed Seat (RFS)**  
**Rowability Upright Seat (RUS)**



# Para-Rowing Classification with corresponding Rowability Grouping

LTA

Rowability  
Sliding  
Seat

TA

Rowability  
Fixed Seat

AS

Rowability  
Upright  
Seat

## **Impairments eligible for Rowability that are not eligible for Para-Rowing:**

### **Examples of eligible impairments**

**Learning Disability** – eligibility must be evidenced verifying an IQ test at Full Scale score of 75 or lower. This test must be conducted before the Age of 18, or by a signed declaration from a school teacher, medical doctor, psychologist stating clearly the evidence on which the diagnosis of age of onset pre-18 is based.

**Complex Regional Pain Syndrome** – an uncommon form of chronic pain that usually affects an arm or a leg. Complex regional pain syndrome typically develops after an injury, surgery, stroke or heart attack, but the pain is out of proportion to the severity of the initial injury. Eligibility is at the discretion of the medical classifier during the medical assessment. Athlete will be required to produce supporting documentation from a medical doctor.

**Connective Tissue Disorders** – refers to a group of inherited disorders that weaken connective tissues. Connective tissues are proteins that support skin, bones, blood vessels, and other organs. Examples include Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, Osteogenesis imperfecta.

**Conversion Disorders** – this causes the individual to have neurological symptoms, such as numbness, blindness, paralysis, or fits without a definable organic cause.



# Examples of ineligible health conditions for Rowability

- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
- Hearing Impairment
- Cancer
- Autism Spectrum

Please contact British Rowing to find opportunities for you to take part in Rowing.

## Classification Process

1. Register your interest for Classification directly through a classification opportunity on the British Rowing Calendar, or send an email to: [Jacqui.Johnston@britishrowing.org](mailto:Jacqui.Johnston@britishrowing.org)
2. Complete the relevant paperwork and submit this to the Head of Classification:  
[Simon.Goodey@gbowingteam.org.uk](mailto:Simon.Goodey@gbowingteam.org.uk)

This should be sent two months before a classification opportunity. We will consider late applications, however this could result in a provisional classification or grouping given if the pre-requisite medical documentation is not produced.



3. The paperwork will be reviewed for eligibility. This may require further communication via email or telephone if more information is needed. You will then be invited to a specific Classification Opportunity. A minimum of 6 athletes are required to run a Classification Opportunity.
4. On the day of the classification aim to arrive 20 – 30minutes prior to your appointment. Wear non-restrictive clothing (sports-wear) and bring any equipment you may need to assist you.
5. The classification appointment will last 45minutes to an hour and will involve discussion with a Medical Classifier and then a physical assessment by a Technical Classifier.
6. At the end of the appointment your classifiers will jointly determine the ‘Final Classification’ and the recommended sports class. This status will be noted on the application form which will be signed and submitted.

You will either be given an “N” (new) status, a “C” (confirmed) status, or an “R” (review) status will be given if you have a progressive disability that may improve, or if there is any question regarding the sport class issued. Review status may also be issued if you have a newly diagnosed disability that may change with time. If you have a Review status you will need to be re-tested annually.

7. The form along with your classification status will be copied and submitted to the British Rowing Head of Classification.



For Rowability groupings, the same process takes place to ensure that you meet a minimal disability. Classifications or Groupings will be recorded onto the athlete's British Rowing racing licence (membership at the discounted rate) if the rower is eligible for a Rowability Boat Class, but not classifiable into a British Rowing Sport Class.

## What if I disagree with my classification?

If you believe you have been given an incorrect status, you should submit your appeal to the Head of Classification who will review all the information. If appropriate then a new classification will be arranged and overseen by the Head of Classification.

Contacts:

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