

Guildford City Swimming Club

High Performance Squads Qualifying Criteria and Specification

1st September 2026 to 31st August 2027

National Performance Centre - Senior and Age Group Swimming Programme

Dedicated to Excellence

Guildford City is considered to be the pre-eminent swimming club in the South East and London. In association with the University of Surrey we are a Swim England National Performance Centre and a Swim England Swim Mark Performance Club.

The High-Performance Squads continue the winning tradition started in 1998, which has seen Guildford City rise the competitive ranks.

Guildford City's High-Performance Squads are open to those swimmers who, display the *appropriate work ethic*, *meet the competitive criteria*, make the required *commitment to training and competition*, and *demonstrate a serious attitude* required to become a top swimmer. Swimming at this level becomes a "lifestyle" choice. Invitation into and continued membership of the High-Performance Squads should be seen as a privilege and not an automatic right. As a result of the Club's ongoing success and the ever-increasing demand for places within our High-Performance Squads, criteria for membership continues to be refined.

Criteria for Membership to the High-Performance Squads

General

Membership to the High-Performance Squads is exclusively at the Coaching Team's discretion. Please note that a swimmer does not automatically secure a place in the High-Performance Squads by just achieving the relevant Guildford City Consideration times alone. Both graduation to and continued membership of the High-Performance Squads will normally depend on a swimmer satisfying all of the criteria below. Swimmers will be invited to join and remain in the High-Performance Squads by the relevant Squad's Lead Coach in consultation with the Club's Director of Swimming and the High-Performance Head Coach.

Probationary Period

In entering any of the High-Performance Squads swimmers will generally serve a minimum three-month probationary period during which time they will be carefully monitored to ensure they are coping with the relevant squad's training and competition culture. During this period the Squad Coaches will assess a swimmer's attendance, attitude, aptitude, effort, and progress. Generally, at the end of the probationary period a review meeting will be held with swimmer and parent to discuss the swimmer's performance and decide on whether the swimmer will be offered a permanent place in the High-Performance Squads. In the case of a swimmer not being offered a permanent place, membership of an alternative squad will be made.



1. Work Ethic and Attitude

A swimmer must demonstrate a consistently appropriate strong work ethic over the entire year. Numerous factors will be considered when determining whether a swimmer has displayed a suitable work ethic including (but not limited to):

- a) The Coaching Team's opinion on how a swimmer has coped with the training culture of their current squad and if being considered for promotion whether they will be able to show the required increased commitment and be able to cope with both the physical and emotional demands of the next squad's training culture.
- b) The swimmer showing that they can accept feedback on performance and accept personal responsibility in all aspects of training.

2. Commitment to the Squad Training and Competition Schedule

Attendance records are continuously monitored to ensure that a swimmer is dedicating sufficient time to develop both the skill and fitness levels required in the pool and the gym to succeed. The mandatory squad minimum hours for both pool and land training have been set by the Guildford City Coaches, taking into consideration the Long-Term Athletic Development Plan together with their experience and success in developing high performance swimmers of all ages. Swimmers are expected to regularly attend more than the minimum training hours in order to maximise their improvement and maintain the standards of excellence expected of the High-Performance Squads. They are also expected to follow their squad's competition programme throughout the year. Any variation to the published training or competition programme can only be made with the express permission of the relevant Squad Coaching Team. To minimise compromising swim fitness levels, the inevitable loss of water skills and a general feel for the water, members of all the High-Performance Squads are expected to restrict taking prolonged breaks during the swimming season.

Experience shows that if a swimmer takes seven days off for a holiday during the training season, generally it will then take a further twenty-one days to regain swim fitness levels. In the meantime, the respective squad's training regime has progressed. Team selections and squad membership may be jeopardised by prolonged breaks from training during the season.

It is mandatory for High Performance swimmers selected to represent their Club in league galas or relay teams to compete for the Club even if they consider such participation to be in direct conflict with their personal goals. Selection for team events should be viewed as an honour and athletes will be expected to perform with pride. Swimmers who refuse to participate in the Club's team events will jeopardise their place in the High Performance Squads.

3. Age

Generally meeting the Squad age parameters - Swimmers may graduate to the next squad when they become age eligible, however in some circumstances the Coaches may use their discretion to transfer swimmers between squads without reference to age.

4. Squad Consideration Times

A swimmer will generally have to have achieved and continuously maintained the appropriate Squad Consideration Times. Subject to space availability, High Performance Squad places may be offered to individuals who have not yet achieved the appropriate Squad Consideration Times.

It should be noted that the Coaches are continually reviewing and assessing a swimmer's training ability and attendance and their attitude to learning and progressing. Our goal is to help the child develop into a self-motivated, independent, hardworking athlete. Parents are asked to respect the Coach's judgement and not to expect or request a child's squad promotion.

High Performance Structure

Our High-Performance Squads are structured to ensure every member is receiving a training and development programme designed to meet their specific needs and aspirations.

High Performance "Potential Athlete" Award

For those swimmers who have not achieved the appropriate Squad Consideration Times, High Performance "Potential Athlete" Awards may be offered solely at the Coaches' discretion to swimmers who have demonstrated excellence in training throughout the previous swimming year and who in the Coaches opinion are likely to ultimately achieve the relevant Squad Consideration Times. "Potential Athlete" Awards are strictly renewable on a term-by-term basis and will be governed by the Lead Coaches.

Progressive Training

The training chart below shows the minimum training hours generally required for a swimmer to ultimately be invited to join the Senior or Junior Performance squads.

FEMALE		
Age	Pool	Land
17+	18	3
16	16	2
15	16	2
14	14	2
13	14	2
12	10	1
11	9	1

MALE		
Age	Pool	Land
18+	18	3
17	16	3
16	14	2
15	14	2
14	12	2
13	12	2
12	10	1

All ages are as 31st December 2027

By following this training progression, the chances of reaching a plateau in a swimmer's development will reduce and the probability of long-term success will increase.

Para Swimmers

Guildford City is fully committed to supporting and developing para swimmers as part of an inclusive and high-performance environment. The club operates a fully integrated training programme where Paralympic and Olympic Pathway swimmers train alongside one another within appropriate squads.

Para athletes may be considered for inclusion in the High Performance or Competitive Development Squads at the discretion of the coaching team. In line with national standards, para swimmers should have obtained, or be in the process of obtaining, a domestic or international classification.

Selection will consider not only classification and competitive benchmarks but also the swimmer's personal motivation, attitude, and commitment to training. Athletes should demonstrate the potential to succeed at county and regional level, with long-term aspirations toward selection for the **Aquatics GB Para World Class Programme**.

Guildford City recognises the diverse progression routes for para athletes and is committed to supporting swimmers of all backgrounds and abilities in reaching their full potential within a high-performance framework.

Boarding Schools

At GCSC we are aware of the importance of education and the pressures of balancing academics with serious sporting commitment. Consequently, the idea of combining school with swimming by joining one of the UK specialist swim boarding schools can appear to be very attractive. The boarding school delivery structure differs greatly from our own and we commonly see young people fail to progress in these environments. There are several reasons for this, but the main one appears to be the lack of day-to-day parental support and encouragement so vital in a swimmer's life.

Please note that GCSC main club competition in the UK are the boarding swim schools. Should a swimmer decide to trial with a boarding swim school they will be in direct conflict with our own programme and will have jeopardised their place or opportunity for a future place in the Senior or Junior Performance Squads. Depending on age a place in Senior National, Age Group National or Junior National Squad will generally be made available at this stage.

If a High-Performance swimmer joins a boarding swim school but wishes to remain a member of GCSC and train with the Club during the holidays, then membership of Senior or Junior Performance Squads will not be possible. These Squads are only available for those swimmers who are in full time training with GCSC. As above for boarding swim school trialists depending on age swimmers will be invited to join Senior National, Age Group National or Junior National Squad. Please note training costs will be invoiced at 25% of the relevant squad's fees.

University Membership

At GCSC we want to support University Students who are still training and competing. As such we ask students to pay 10% of the training fee for the squad they are partnered with payable on a monthly direct debit. This payment will be made over the course of the season and allow students to train when back at home. All we ask is that students reach out to respective coaches before returning for planning purposes.

Parent Behaviour

We are committed to providing a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all our swimmers, coaches, and families. We kindly remind you that inappropriate or disruptive behaviour by parents will not be tolerated. This includes disrespect towards staff, swimmers, fellow parents, or anyone associated with Guildford City Swimming Club. Any breach of the standard laid out in our Codes of Conduct may result in exclusion from the club with immediate effect and without appeal or refund. We appreciate your support in maintaining the positive atmosphere that allows all members to thrive.

This approach of ensuring members are provided with a safe environment is fully endorsed by Swim England.

Additional Notes

- Special consideration may be made at the Coaches' discretion waiving the age parameters. In reviewing each case Coaches will consider the history of a swimmer's commitment to training and competition as well as their work ethic and maturity.
- The Coaches may waive any of the criteria contained in this document at their sole discretion.
- Please note that times stated may change without prior notice or justification.
- Graduation from squad to squad will normally take place at the beginning of the new swimming year in September.
- Swimmers will retain their place in the High-Performance section by maintaining all of the relevant squad criteria.
- Swimmers missing prolonged periods of training for various reasons (including but not limited to exams, illness, holidays) maybe invited to train with a more appropriate squad until they have regained their fitness or skills levels to the High-Performance standard. Generally, athletes with injuries will continue within their squad to re-build fitness.
- Due to its variable nature Open Water Swimming will not be considered as qualification to move or to retain squad places.
- Swimmers and/or parents failing to adhere to the clubs Code of Conduct could jeopardise their place in the High-Performance Squads. Procedures will be carried out as per the disciplinary procedures outlined on the Club website.

Any swimmer attending any swimming activity (including a trial at another swimming club or educational establishment) outside of Guildford City Swimming Club without their Coaches express permission may be asked to leave High Performance without any prior notice



Mission



Motto

'Shaping the Future of Swimming in the South East'



Mission Statement

Every day we strive to provide an environment where personal excellence, honesty and commitment are expected. Through the pursuit of our dreams and goals we learn valuable life skills and develop the drive to achieve our potential in swimming and life. We are committed to fostering a healthy environment (mentally and physically) where swimmers are not afraid to fall down, fall short or fail in the lofty pursuit of their dreams; this is where character is developed.



Vision Statement

To continue to build a tradition of swimming excellence and develop our national reputation for producing passionate, inspired and high producing swimmers and coaches. Our aim is to ensure that every athlete has the opportunity to reach their potential within the sport (regardless of standard) and to provide a culture that encourages learning and personal development within a safe friendly environment. Good sportsmanship will always be encouraged with the expectation that our members strive to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. To maintain the highest possible standards we believe that team unity, character development and personal responsibility are paramount to providing a successful culture for all.





Values





Key Values

★ Teamwork

Support each other

We aim to support everyone involved with Guildford City Swimming Club or the University of Surrey. This includes **supporting team mates** at competitions and training partners during training sessions.

★ Performance

Commitment

This involves making a commitment to the club and includes commitment to **attendance, work ethic** and **punctuality** at training, competition and any other activities associated with the club.

Adaptability

Everyone needs to be adaptable to training and competition but we expect all members to show **willingness** and **tenacity** to changing under challenging circumstances. Furthermore, we all need to show **resilience** within our lives and the ability to bounce back from adversity is an important quality.

★ Character

Responsibility

Our expectation is that every member takes responsibility for their actions to include training, competition and any other activities and lifestyle management.

Respect

Our expectation is that everyone shows respect for other **members**, the **facility** and for us as **individuals**.

Ownership

Our expectation is that we all take ownership for the **process** of **training**, take **accountability** for our actions and ownership for **self-reflection** of our actions.

