



## Ontario Athlete Advisory Council Terms of Reference

<b>Committee Name:</b>	Ontario Athlete Advisory Council (Athlete Council)
<b>Type:</b>	Standing Committee
<b>Values Statement:</b>	<p>Ontario Artistic Swimming (OAS) believes that everyone in our sport has a right to enjoy the sport at whatever level or position they participate. Athletes have the right to participate in a safe and welcoming training and competitive environment that is free of abuse, harassment, maltreatment, or discrimination.</p> <p>The Ontario Athlete Advisory Council is committed to fostering these values and supporting the principles of safe sport and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). This includes achieving an Athlete Council membership that reflects a broad range of qualifications, skills, experiences, and perspectives. A diverse Council working in an atmosphere of inclusion will produce better decisions and recommendations and increase the capacity of OAS to address and serve the interests of the artistic swimming community in Ontario.</p> <p>To give effect to this statement, the Athlete Council within its processes for identifying potential members will search for potential candidates who reflect the diversity of Canadian society, having particular regard to underrepresented groups including but not limited to those represented by race, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and persons with disabilities.</p> <p>In addition, three (3) voting members of the Athlete Council will be selected from within the Council composition to support the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Safe sport and athlete well-being;</li><li>b. Equity, diversity, and inclusion; and</li><li>c. The interests of para-athletes.</li></ul>
<b>Composition:</b>	The Athlete Council is comprised of between five (5) and seven (7) voting members plus one (1) 13-15 Athletes' advisory representative

and one (1) or two (2) advisory members selected from the broader artistic swimming community in Ontario who act as mentors or consultants and can give advice and support the voting members through important decisions.

### **Voting Members**

Athlete Council voting members include:

- a. Up to two (2) National and High-performance Athletes' Representatives;
- b. Up to two (2) Provincial Athletes' Representatives;
- c. Master Athletes' Representative;
- d. CUASL Athletes' Representative;
- e. At least one (1) and up to three (3) additional athlete members.

### **Non-voting Members**

Athlete Council non-voting members include:

- a. 13-15 Athletes' Representative; and
- b. Up to two (2) advisory members.

The 13-15 Athletes' Advisory Representative will be appointed by Athlete Council members, by majority vote, following a call for interest among athletes in the 13-15 age group.

The advisory members will be appointed by Athletes Council members in collaboration with the OAS Human Resources Committee, following a call for interest. Advisory members may include individuals from all registrant categories in Ontario who have skills deemed beneficial to Council business.

### **Eligibility:**

Members of the Athlete Council must be registered and in good standing with OAS and remain in good standing while serving as a member.

Voting members must:

- a. Be sixteen (16) years of age or older; and
- b. Be a registered athlete with OAS at the time of their election or appointment. Existing Council members remain eligible to serve on the Council for up to one (1) year after they cease to be registered as an athlete with OAS.

Athlete Council members will be asked to:

- a. Acknowledge the Conduct Policy annually;
- b. Sign a Confidentiality Agreement annually;
- c. Fulfill the requirements of the CAS Screening Policy; and

- d. Complete all training required by Canada Artistic Swimming (CAS) and OAS relating to ethics.

**Chair:**

The Chair of the Athlete Council will:

- a. Be elected to a two-year term by the members of the Athlete Council. The Chair may serve up to two (2) terms for a maximum of four (4) years;
- b. Convene all meetings of the Athletes Council;
- c. Be the liaison to the Executive Director or their delegate and meet with the Executive Director at least quarterly to present any feedback and recommendations of the Council;
- d. Be the liaison to the Ontario Coach Committee (OCC) and Ontario Officials' Committee (OOC);
- e. Present an annual report to OAS Members at the OAS Annual Meeting;
- f. Be responsible for succession planning and present the recommended applicants to the Executive Director for approval and ratification;
- g. Be the OAS representative on the CAS Athlete Committee; and
- h. Act as the link with provincial athlete representatives where they exist and work to promote and encourage this role.

**Purpose:**

The Athlete Council is an operational Standing Committee of OAS whose purpose is to:

- a. Represent the views and opinions of athletes and share those views and opinions within OAS;
- b. Promote and advance a training and competition environment that is inclusive, safe, and upholds the highest ethical standards;
- c. Ensure athletes are informed about developments in the sport and OAS activities (e.g., policies, rules, and training);
- d. In addition to the other resources and contacts available to athletes, act as a point of contact for athlete concerns;
- e. Develop and maintain an engagement plan to do the following:
  - Ensure regular communication with athletes, coaches, OAS staff, board and committee members, officials, and other stakeholders;
  - Engage with athletes and alumni to get meaningful feedback on topics such as barriers to participation, competition structure, rule changes, safe sport, inclusion, and any other topic athletes may have concerns about;

- Present any feedback and recommendations of the Council to the Executive Director or their delegate;
- Present an annual report to OAS Members at the OAS Annual Meeting; and
- Maintain contact with the CAS Athlete Committee and provincial athlete representatives where they exist.

**Objectives:**

The objectives of the Athlete Council are to:

- a. Consider issues related to athletes and provide feedback and recommendations to OAS;
- b. Engage actively with initiatives and projects that protect and support athletes;
- c. Represent the rights and interests of athletes and make related recommendations;
- d. Consult with athletes in the evaluation of policies, rules, and training and subsequently provide feedback to OAS; and
- e. Work with and support OAS in its mission to develop and promote the sport of artistic swimming.

**Responsible To:**

The Executive Director or their delegate.

**Term:**

The term for Athlete Council members can be up to two (2) years. The term is renewable for three (3) consecutive terms to a maximum of six (6) years if members continue to meet the conditions required for membership.

**Interim Structure:**

A call for interest will be made to all registered Ontario athletes in good standing to fill the following positions:

- a. Up to two (2) National and High-performance Athletes' Representatives;
- b. Up to two (2) Provincial Athletes' Representatives;
- c. Master Athletes' Representative;
- d. CUASL Athletes' Representative; and
- e. At least one (1) and up to three (3) additional athlete members.

The Executive Director in collaboration with the OAS Human Resources Committee will select the most qualified applicants who reflect the diversity of Canadian society. Representation of all four (4) regions will also be considered.

Once appointed, Athlete Council members will elect, by majority vote, the Council Chair.

Athlete Council members will oversee implementation of elections for the following positions as soon as feasible and no later than the 2023-

24 competitive season to ensure a majority of Council members are elected by registered Ontario athletes:

- a. National and High-performance Athletes' Representative(s);
- b. Provincial Athletes' Representative(s);
- c. Master Athletes' Representative; and
- d. CUASL Athletes' Representative.

Membership cycles should be staggered, with no more than three elections or appointments terminating in any year. Athlete Council members will work with the Executive Director and the OAS Nominations Committee in outlining the procedures to be followed for the call for interest and elections.

**Meetings:**

The first meeting of the Athlete Council will be scheduled ***following selection.***

Thereafter, meetings will be held at least four (4) times a year at the call of the Chair or by request of a majority of Council members with additional meetings scheduled as required to complete the Council's business. The calendar of these meetings will be made public on the OAS website.

Meetings may be held by way of in-person, teleconference, internet, or email as determined by the Chair. The OAS Executive Director is responsible for ensuring, within the means of OAS, that the Athlete Council is able to meet.

Meetings will be conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order* and the agenda will include a review and approval of minutes from the previous meeting including consideration of the status of any action items resulting from that meeting. Each meeting will include a report from the members responsible for safe sport, EDI, and para-athletes. A synopsis of the meetings will be submitted to the Executive Director and OAS board and reported on the Athlete Council page of the OAS website within fourteen (14) days after a meeting.

**Quorum:**

A majority of its voting members (50% plus 1).

**Voting:**

Each Athlete Council member is entitled to one (1) vote. Resolutions will be passed upon a majority of the votes being in favour of the resolution. A resolution is defeated in the case of a tie.

**Vacancy:**

When a vacancy occurs, the Athlete Council Chair in consultation with other members of the Council may appoint a qualified individual to fill the vacancy for the balance of the competitive season, at which point a call for interest will be made to all registered Ontario athletes.

<b>Removal:</b>	By a majority vote of its members, the Athlete Council may remove any member of the Council.
	If a member is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings for any reason, the Athlete Council can request, by majority vote, the removal of that member from their Council commitments.
	If an Athlete Council member is no longer in good standing as defined in the OAS By-laws including for lapsed registration, failure to make required payments, disciplinary action, or the member is under investigation for alleged maltreatment, misconduct, or non-compliance with CAS or OAS by-laws, policies or rules, they will be automatically removed.
<b>Reporting:</b>	The Athlete Council will report to the Executive Director or their delegate at least quarterly and provide reports on issues as they arise and on all meeting proceedings.
<b>Authority:</b>	The Athlete Council is empowered by the Executive Director to make recommendations within the mandate established by these Terms of Reference.
<b>Responsibilities:</b>	<p>The Athlete Council will develop and maintain an engagement plan to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide athlete representation to OAS staff including having the Chair or a designate meet with the Executive Director or their delegate at least quarterly;</li> <li>b. Act as a sounding board to OAS staff and board and committee members on matters affecting athletes;</li> <li>c. Provide input on key OAS activities that directly or indirectly affect athletes including any policy or rule changes;</li> <li>d. Host Athlete Town Hall forums at least four (4) times a year to get meaningful feedback from registered athletes and alumni on topics such as safe sport, EDI, competition structure, rule changes, and any other topic athletes may have concerns about. Feedback and recommendations from the Athlete Town Hall forums should be presented during meetings with the Executive Director and reflected in the annual report to OAS Members;</li> <li>e. Provide key insights and feedback from athletes to the Executive Director on athlete well-being;</li> <li>f. Provide key insights and feedback from athletes to the Executive Director on how to improve diversity and make all OAS participants feel welcomed;</li> </ul>

- g. Suggest resources to be made available to athletes on all matters relating to the performance and well-being of the athlete;
- h. Recommend content for the Athlete Council page on the OAS website;
- i. Maintain contact with the CAS Athlete Committee and provincial athlete representatives where they exist and work to promote and encourage this role; and
- j. Present an annual report to OAS Members at the OAS Annual Meeting.

**Budget:** The Chair is responsible for submitting annual budget projections and project budget applications to the ED for approval and inclusion in the annual OAS budget. As the board is financially responsible to its Members, the board must approve all expenditures proposed outside of the approved annual budget by the Athlete Council prior to spending.

**Approval:** Terms of Reference approved by the OAS board.

**Date Approved:** May 11, 2021