

Open Meet Licensing Criteria

Effective 1st February 2026

“Every swimmer must have the opportunity to swim in appropriate, quality competition to enable them to achieve their true potential”

This is the mission statement that supports the purpose of Meet Licensing and these Criteria have been developed to provide clubs and competition providers with common ground rules for the conduct and delivery of such competition. All Licensed meets shall be subject to Swim England Regulations and Technical Rules, and to these Criteria.

Under Swim England Regulation 3.1 each region is responsible for managing the sport of swimming within its boundaries subject to the strategic direction of the Company.

Open Meet Levels

Level 1

Meets at this level include long course Regional and County Championships.

Long Course National Meets promoted by Swim England are not Licensed but are to the same standard and the times are input to rankings at level one.

Purpose: To enable athletes to achieve qualifying times suitable for entry into National, Regional and County Championships.

Pool Length: Long course (50m) only. The pool measurement certificate has to be registered with Swim England – Further information can be found [here](#).

Entry Criteria: A minimum qualifying time is required. Swimmer's submitted entry time can be verified in Rankings and must be from Level 1 or 2 for National events, and from Level 1, 2 or 3 for Regional and County Championships. County Championships and Open Meets may choose to accept entry times from Level 4 meets.

Events: Meets can be held at any time, subject to the restrictions shown on the Swim England Competition Calendar and below, and the programme must include at least one 400m event for each gender.

Meets in the qualifying period for the British Summer Championships and the Swim England Summer Meet must additionally include 800m and 1500m Freestyle events for each gender on the programme.

Age Groups: Open Meets may choose as at 31st December in year of competition or age on

the last day of competition. This date shall be the same for all age groups.

Minimum Age; 10 years if age as at 31st December, or 9 years if age on the last day of competition.

Electronic Timing and anti-turbulence lane ropes are required.

Officials: See separate document for requirements.

Licence Fee: 35 pence per accepted entry.

Level 2

Meets at this level include short course Regional and County Championships.

Short Course National Meets promoted by Swim England are not Licensed but are to the same standard and the times are input to rankings at level two.

Purpose: To enable athletes to achieve qualifying times suitable for entry into National, Regional and County Championships.

Pool Length: Short course (25m) only. The pool measurement certificate has to be registered with Swim England – Further information can be found [here](#).

Entry Criteria: A minimum qualifying time is required. Swimmer's submitted entry time can be verified in Rankings and must be from Level 1 or 2 for National events, and from Level 1, 2 or 3 for Regional and County Championships. County Championships and Open Meets may choose to accept entry times from Level 4 meets.

Events: Meets can be held at any time, subject to the restrictions shown on the Swim England Competition Calendar and below, and the programme must include at least one 400m event for each gender.

Age Groups: Open Meets may choose as at 31st December in year of competition or age on the last day of competition. This date shall be the same for all age groups.

Minimum Age; 10 years if age as at 31st December, or 9 years if age on the last day of competition.

Electronic Timing and anti-turbulence lane ropes are required.

Officials: See separate document for requirements.

Licence Fee: 35 pence per accepted entry.

Level 3

Purpose: To enable athletes to achieve times suitable for entry into Regional and County Championships and other Meets at Level 1 or Level 2.

Pool length: Long course (50m) or Short course (25m)

Qualification Standards: Upper cut-off times are required for entry (except in the case of single-club events such as a Club Championship), and lower qualifying times may be set. **Swimmers must have an entry time** to ensure that they fall within the qualifying times, but it is not compulsory for entry times to come from Rankings. Organising clubs may however make this stipulation in their Meet Conditions. Organising clubs may choose to accept an estimate by a Coach.

All entrants must be registered as Club Compete members.

Events: Varied range of strokes and distances is recommended.

Age Groups: As at 31st December in year of competition or age on the last day of the competition. This date shall be the same for all age groups.

Minimum Age: 10 years if age as at 31st December, or 9 years if age on the last day of the Competition, except for single club competitions, when Swim England Regulations apply.

Electronic Timing is required.

Officials: See separate document for requirements.

Licence Fee: 20 pence per accepted entry.

Level 4

Exceptionally, Open Meets which are not Levels 1, 2 or 3, (e.g. Borough Championships), **and** events meeting the Swim England criteria for a Low Level Competition which are:

- A single club competition restricted to its members (as in Club Championships and Time Trials), OR
- Inter-club competitions providing:
 - The event does not include more clubs than there are lanes in the pool.
 - The participating clubs must be invited by the promoter to take part in the event.
 - The promoter has supplied the conditions for the event.
 - The whole event takes place in one pool on one occasion and does not form a series of events, the results of which are aggregated or considered together to decide the eventual winner.

Purpose: For the development of inexperienced athletes and those seeking to compete outside their own club environment. Times recorded are suitable for entry into County Championships where acceptable to the County concerned, and Meets at Level 3.

Times are not acceptable for entry into Regional and National Events.

Pool Length - Only times set in 25 m or 50 m pools are entered into Rankings.

Open to Club Train and Club Compete members as appropriate to the competition. Events: Varied Range of strokes and distances is recommended

Age Groups: As at 31st December in year of competition or age on the last day of the competition. This date shall be the same for all age groups.

Minimum Age: as specified in Swim England Regulations appropriate to the competition. Electronic Timing recommended but not essential.

Officials: See separate document for requirements.

Licence Fee: 20 pence per accepted entry, or £25 per calendar year for single club events.

Criteria for all Licensed Meets

1. Health and Safety is paramount. A risk assessment must be carried out.
2. The minimum length of a pool used is 25 metres. The depth of the water at the starting end must be in accordance with Swim England guidance and the Pool Operator's Standard Operating Procedures.
3. Adequate provision must be made for swimmers to warm-up. Meet conditions must state whether warm-down facilities are available and whether these are pool or dry-side facilities.
4. All meets licensed at Levels 1 and 2 must provide a secondary strobe where it is requested by an athlete at the time of entry. All applications at Level 3 must stipulate in their Meet Conditions whether a secondary starting strobe will be available or not.
5. In the case of Level 1 or 2 Meets, if there are backstroke starting ledges at the venue, they must be made available.
6. Everywhere the Conditions would previously have said "Male", "Boy", "Man" or "Men", they now need to say "Open/Male", "Open/Boy", "Open/Man" or "Open/Men", plus the following clause must appear in the meet Conditions:
The Female category is for birth sex females in accordance with Swim England's Transgender and Non-Binary Competition Policy. By entering the 'Female' category, a swimmer confirms that their birth sex is female.
7. Sufficient poolside accreditation must be available for clubs to maintain adequate supervision of their athletes.
8. "First come-first served" entry acceptance is available at levels 3 or 4 only.
9. No session of competition shall require officials to work longer than 3 hours without a 15 minute break.
10. Results must be processed using meet management software capable of automated input into British Rankings. Results to be uploaded within 5 working days of completion of the competition
11. A Licence is issued by the Regional Licensing Officer (RLO) of the Region to which the organising club is affiliated, subject to submission of a valid application.
12. Promoters holding a meet outside of their own Region must have the agreement of the RLO of the host Region, who has the right to insist on specific conditions to suit the swimming programme in the host Region.
13. Reports and returns to be sent to the RLO, including payment of fees, within 14 days of the competition.
14. A detailed report to be submitted to the RLO by the Referee upon completion of the competition.
15. The RLO may lay down sanctions to be taken in the event of non-compliance with the criteria.
16. In the event of any dispute regarding meet licensing, appeals can be made by the Promoter of the event to the National Licensing Panel via the Swim England Swimming Leadership Group.

Points to Note

1. Meets at any level can take part at any time of year with the exception of specified "protected" dates when meets of certain levels may not be permitted in certain geographical areas.
2. County Championships are scheduled to take place in January and February.
3. A club may hold a competition within the County Period, but may not accept entries from clubs in the same or any adjacent County if that County Association is holding a corresponding event on that day.
4. Regional Championships are scheduled to take place in April and May. No Level 1 or Level 2 meet will be licensed in a Region on the same date as the Regional Championships of that Region.
5. Licensing of league events is subject to separate criteria, which can be found in the Swim England library at <http://www.swimming.org/sport/licensed-meets/>
6. The attention of Regions and Counties is drawn to the "Swimming Pathway Implementation" document, with regard to essential and desirable elements for inclusion.
7. A Meet Promoter must be named in the Meet Conditions. Where this is an organisation such as a club, then a representative individual must be named.
8. Meet Promoters are reminded that it may take a few days before times are available on Rankings and that they should bear this in mind when setting closing dates and organising "last chance" meets.

Application

1. Applications for a meet licence must be made on the standard form.
2. Ideally applications should be received by the Regional Licensing Officer at least 2 months before the date of the meet, together with all the information requested on the application form.
3. Applications will not be forwarded to the National Licensing Office until complete information is available.
4. The proposed date of the competition must comply with the National Licensed Meet Calendar plan.
5. The meet information must indicate clearly the level of swimmer that the meet is intended for by reference to the licensing level.
6. Counties and Regions must complete the application process and supply the relevant information. They do not have to pay any levy for their Annual Championships providing they are held within the allocated period.
7. The National Swimming League Final, BUCS Long & Short Course Championships, Inter County Competitions and the ESSA National Individual Championships must make application to be licensed to the appropriate Regional Licensing Officer. They do not have to pay any levy.
8. The Regional Licensing Officer may request applicants to vary their application to give a better provision of swimming in a particular area.
9. **All licence applications require processing by the National Licensing Office following recommendation of the Regional Licensing Officer.**

Please note that the Licensed Meet Officials' Requirements are now
given in a separate document at
<https://www.swimming.org/sport/licensed-meets/>

