

# United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee Procedure



**Procedure Name:** NGB Certification Renewal Procedure

**Governing USOPC Policy:** NGB Certification Policy

**Date of Issuance:** 9/25/2025

**Owner:** Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer

**Applies to:** USOPC Certification Review Group, NGB Oversight and Compliance Committee, USOPC Board of Directors, and NGBs

## **Purpose:**

To outline the procedures for carrying out the NGB Certification Policy (the Policy) for existing NGBs whose certification is being renewed.

## **Procedure Statement:**

The Certification Review Group (CRG) is tasked with reviewing NGBs holistically and making a recommendation on the renewal of their NGB certification. By conducting the process outlined in this Procedure, the CRG does the necessary due diligence to ensure that all organizations certified as an NGB continue to comply with the requirements of an NGB, including those included in the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (the Act), the USOPC Bylaws, and the NGB Compliance Standards, as well as operate effectively as an NGB, both at the time of the certification renewal and sustainably moving forward.

## **Statement of Procedures:**

### **1. CRG Certification Renewal Schedule**

Approximately one quarter of currently certified NGBs are scheduled for certification renewal during any given year. The cyclical certification renewal schedule is set by the Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer, or her/his designee, to align with the Audit team's NGB audit schedule (see Appendix A). NGBs will undergo certification renewal following their quadrennial audit, with the initial assessment period beginning upon issuance of the audit report.

### **2. Review Criteria, Ratings, and Recommendations**

#### **A. CRG Review Criteria and Examples**

The CRG review of an NGB will consist of the following review criteria:

- i. The NGB's most recent audit results.
- ii. Information to bring the NGB's most recent audit current.
  - a. The CRG will note any developments with the NGB since the conclusion of its most recent audit and the significance of those developments in evaluating whether the NGB is capable of meeting, or continuing to meet, the obligations of an NGB as contemplated in the Act, the USOPC Bylaws, and NGB Compliance Standards.

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- iii. The deeper knowledge that each CRG member brings, in their reasonable judgment, regarding how an NGB is performing in their area against procedures or specific metrics not already covered in the certification audit. Examples of feedback or metrics specific to each department are outlined below.
  - a. Audit – NGB’s cooperation with and responsiveness to Audit.
  - b. Compliance – NGB cooperation with and responsiveness to any NGB Compliance matters and requests; patterns of similar or repeated compliance issues arising, including those related to ongoing compliance monitoring; patterns of similar or repeated concerns expressed by NGB members and others.
  - c. NGB Services – Evaluation of the NGB’s focus on its mission and support of athletes; view of the organization’s overall governance effectiveness; presence of the operational and administrative capabilities necessary to effectively run the organization; patterns of similar or repeated concerns expressed by members and others.
  - d. Athlete Services – NGB’s commitment to medical and athlete wellness issues; views on an NGB’s relationships and interactions with athletes; NGB management and implementation of its athlete support programs; input from the NGB’s AAC and the NGB’s athlete representative to the Team USA Athletes’ Commission.
  - e. Legal – NGB conduct during DRU-managed disputes; types, content and number of complaints raised by an NGB’s members through Legal channels; patterns of similar or repeated concerns expressed by NGB’s members and others.
  - f. Olympic & Paralympic Sport Performance – NGB’s leadership in its sport at developmental and grassroots levels; NGB effectiveness in seeking and deploying USOPC athlete support funding; implementation of Paralympic classification policies and procedures; meaningful integration of Paralympic sport considerations.
  - g. Athlete Safety – Views on an NGB from its interactions with the U.S. Center for SafeSport; sufficiency of athlete safety programs that demonstrate a strong, existing commitment to athlete safety; concerns raised by athletes or others related to athlete safety.
- iv. Other more subjective and qualitative criteria not subject to audit but nonetheless important to an NGB’s performance as part of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement as may be defined in the reasonable judgment of the CRG.

Such criteria should be documented and explained as part of the CRG’s review and recommendation process, and must in each case include whether an NGB is actively promoting a culture of integrity, which includes honesty, safety, openness, respect, transparency, excellence, and the avoidance of conflicts of interest or self-dealing.

## B. Exceptions

The CRG may, in its reasonable judgment, allow limited exceptions for NGBs from meeting one or more of the NGB Compliance Standards in accordance with Section 8.4.2 of the USOPC Bylaws and the Policy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All exception requests related to athlete representation requirements must be submitted to the Athlete Representation Review Working Group (ARRWG). The CRG will collaborate with the ARRWG to ensure its decisions are reflected in the certification process.

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An NGB may request an exception by submitting such a request, in writing, to the USOPC's Compliance Operations department during the certification process. A certified NGB may submit such requests at any time, but it is expected that exception requests will generally be submitted during the NGB's audit or shortly thereafter.

The CRG will evaluate the merits of exception requests and approve or reject them, providing feedback in the event of an exception request rejection. All exceptions granted to an NGB will be noted in its final certification report.

## **C. Certification Ratings**

Each member department of the CRG will assign the NGB a rating for matters related to their functional roles. For some certification renewals, not every department represented on the CRG will have meaningful input due to a lack of interaction. In such cases, that department will not provide an individual rating.

The rating system is tiered and includes the following ratings:

### **i. Green**

A green rating indicates that the NGB is performing satisfactorily overall as measured against that department's review criteria. A green rating does not indicate that an NGB is performing perfectly and has no room for improvement; rather, identified issues are considered marginal deficiencies that the NGB must address, but are not serious enough to delay or attach conditions to the certification decision.

### **ii. Yellow**

A yellow rating indicates that the NGB has a significant deficiency on a department's review criteria that, if not resolved, could lead to decertification under Section 8 of the USOPC Bylaws. A significant deficiency that leads to a yellow rating is distinct from the day-to-day challenges and opportunities for improvement that all NGBs face and CRG members encounter in their direct work with an NGB.

A yellow rating should come as little surprise to an NGB, as it indicates a significant issue or challenge that has not already been resolved as part of its ongoing work to achieve excellence in its performance as an NGB. Nothing in the certification process replaces or impedes ongoing efforts by an NGB, with the support of the USOPC, to achieve excellence in its performance as an NGB.

### **iii. Red**

A red rating indicates that an NGB has such a severe deficiency on one or more of a department's review criteria that it may merit the immediate initiation of the NGB decertification process under Section 8 of the USOPC Bylaws.

## **D. CRG Certification Recommendations**

The CRG will work as a group to develop an overall certification recommendation for the NGB. The overall renewal recommendation of the CRG for NGBs will be based on the aggregated ratings of each participating department.

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## **i. Renewal in Good Standing**

The CRG will issue a Renewal in Good Standing recommendation if no CRG member has rated the NGB as yellow or red.

## **ii. Renewal with Conditions**

The CRG will issue a Renewal with Conditions recommendation if, at the time the CRG issues its final recommendation report, there are outstanding issues that led at least one CRG member, but less than a majority of CRG members, to rate the NGB as yellow.

NGBs receiving a conditional recommendation will be required to satisfactorily resolve the outstanding issues leading to the conditional recommendation within the time specified by the CRG in the conditional recommendation report provided to the Board of Directors. The CRG will track remediation efforts and determine, in its reasonable judgment, whether the deficiencies identified have been satisfactorily resolved within the specified period. The CRG department(s) that identified the issues will be primarily responsible for confirming that the identified deficiencies have been effectively remediated. A conditional recommendation may be resolved in two ways:

- a. If the CRG determines that the NGB's remediation is satisfactory, then the CRG will recommend that the NGB's certification status be updated to Certified in Good Standing or Renewal in Good Standing and submit an addendum report to the NGBOC Committee and Board of Directors.
- b. If the CRG determines that the NGB's remediation is not satisfactory or the NGB does not complete the remediation within the specified period, then the CRG may impose additional accountability measures including and up to the initiation of decertification proceedings for the NGB.

## **iii. Compliance Review and Decertification Proceedings**

If any CRG member rates an NGB as red, or if a majority of CRG members rate the NGB as yellow, the certification process will be paused.

The Compliance team will initiate a review of the issue(s) that led to the adverse rating(s) and determine, in its discretion, if the NGB has failed to meet its compliance obligations and whether accountability measures, up to and including the initiation of decertification proceedings, are immediately necessary. Compliance may elect to work with the NGB to resolve the issue(s) rather than immediately initiating the decertification process.

Compliance will conduct its review in accordance with principles and processes outlined in the [Compliance Policy](#), the Compliance Investigations Procedure, and any other applicable procedures, and provide appropriate progress updates to the CRG. Following the completion of its review, Compliance will report to the CRG on the status of the issue(s) that led to the initial red ratings and share its determination about resuming the certification review or initiating decertification proceedings.

- a. Recommendations and Certification Statuses

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The CRG will not issue a recommendation report if an NGB's certification review is paused in accordance with the NGB Certification Policy, but the CRG will maintain the certification status of the NGB publicly in the event that a certification review is not resumed and completed by the end of the scheduled renewal period.

If a compliance review is initiated but is not concluded by the end of the NGB's renewal period, the NGB's public certification status will be updated to **Pending Additional Review** and it will remain so until the conclusion of the compliance review period, at which point the certification review will resume.

If decertification proceedings are initiated but have not concluded by the end of the NGB's renewal period, the NGB's public certification status will be updated to **Pending Hearing Panel** and it will remain so until the conclusion of the decertification proceedings.

If the outcome of a decertification proceeding is not to immediately decertify but to instead impose probationary conditions that must be remediated within an established timeframe, then the NGB's public certification status will be updated to **Probationary Renewal**. Upon successful remediation, the hearing panel that oversaw the decertification proceeding will recommend to the CRG to continue its review and prepare a certification recommendation report. If the probationary conditions are not successfully remediated within the required timeframe, then the NGB will be decertified in accordance with the hearing panel's ruling.

## 3. CRG Review and Certification Recommendation Reports

### A. NGB Engagement and Preparation of the Certification Recommendation Report

The CRG's review includes ongoing fact gathering, conferring, and discussion, including between CRG members, the NGB, NGB Athlete Advisory Councils (AACs), and NGB athlete representatives to the Team USA Athletes' Commission, so that all parties can have a sense of certification issues as soon as possible.

The CRG will engage in these steps during the certification review process.

#### i. Initial Conversations

- a. The CRG will meet and determine its overall assessment of the NGB's status based on each CRG member's rating (green/yellow/red) for their department. Compliance will share this assessment of the NGB's status with the NGB CEO/ED, Board Chair, and Team USA Athletes' Commission representative.
- b. Compliance and the NGB will discuss work toward resolution of identified deficiencies. The CRG will provide a tracking document with information about the deficiencies, the resolution for those deficiencies, and any USOPC resources that may be helpful to remediating the deficiencies. The NGB will also receive a deadline for submitting documentation of its completed remediation work for consideration as part of its final certification recommendation report. This deadline will align with the end of the validation period for the NGB's audit.
- c. The CRG will make every effort to complete these steps within 30 days of the issuance of the NGB's audit report.

#### ii. Draft Certification Recommendation Report

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- a. Following the initial discussions and updates on the NGB's progress, the CRG will update its recommendation to be consistent with the current state of the NGB and Compliance will develop the CRG's draft certification recommendation report. This draft report will include details about actions that the NGB has taken or has agreed to take in response to previously identified deficiencies affecting its certification status.
- b. Following socialization and approval of the draft report by the CRG, Compliance will share the draft certification recommendation report with the NGB, including the CEO/ED, Board Chair, and Team USA Athletes' Commission representative for review. The NGB will have a reasonable opportunity to correct any perceived misstatements of fact in the draft certification recommendation report and provide status updates about issues it is working to resolve.
- c. The CRG will make every effort to complete these steps within 30 days of the end of the NGB's audit validation period.

## iii. Final Recommendation Report

- a. Following the feedback period on the draft certification report, Compliance will, in its discretion, revise the draft report and present a final draft to the CRG. The CRG will review, provide any final comments, and the CRG's recommendation will be finalized. When the CRG's recommendation report is finalized, it will be shared with the NGB's CEO/ED, Board Chair, and Team USA Athletes' Commission representative for their information, and with the USOPC CEO for review and approval. Once the CRG submits its final report to the USOPC CEO, the CRG's recommendation is final.
- b. The CRG will make every effort to complete these steps within 90 days of the end of the NGB's audit validation period.

## B. Certification Ratification

Following approval by the CEO, the Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer will present the CRG's final NGB certification report to the NGB Oversight and Compliance Committee (NGBOC) for review and approval.

Upon approval of the NGBOC, the NGBOC Chair will present the final NGB certification report to the Board of Directors for ratification.

## C. Publication

After the Board of Directors' ratification, an NGB's certification is renewed. The CRG will share the final NGB certification report with the NGB's CEO, Board Chair, and Team USA Athletes' Commission representative before the report is made public. The USOPC will publish the NGB's certification report online 14 days later, along with the following information:

- Certification term
- Certification status at the time of initial certification decision by the USOPC Board
- Current certification status

An NGB's current status will not cause the certification status at the time of initial certification to be deleted (e.g., an NGB which fulfills its obligations to move from "Renewal with Conditions" to "Renewal in Good

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Standing” will not have the initial “Renewal with Conditions” status removed from the USOPC webpage). For transparency purposes, that information will remain online, along with the current status, until the time of the NGB’s next scheduled certification renewal review.

## **4. Off-Cycle Certification Recommendations**

In addition to conducting quadrennial certification renewals, the CRG also ensures that an NGB’s certification status is an accurate reflection of the NGB’s performance in the interim. The CRG may, at any point, open a discussion about an NGB’s certification status and, if warranted, make a recommendation to downgrade the status.

Off-cycle certification downgrades are not a method for addressing routine governance and compliance issues that may arise at an NGB that is otherwise in good standing. Those kinds of concerns are often resolved collaboratively between NGBs and the Compliance and/or NGB Services departments. Off-cycle certification downgrades are reserved for significant compliance concerns that require greater accountability measures, such as:

- Inability to meet, or otherwise demonstrate good faith efforts to meet, the requirements of a USOPC-issued Demand Letter by the stated deadline
- Persistent, ongoing compliance concerns for which previous collaborative work and interventions have not been effective at resolving the underlying issues.

If the CRG conducts an off-cycle review and determines a status adjustment is necessary, the CRG will recommend to the NGBOC Committee and Board of Directors that the NGB’s certification status be downgraded to Renewal with Conditions with conditions intended to resolve the underlying concern(s) leading to the off-cycle review and downgrade recommendation. As with any other conditional certification, once the NGB has met the conditions to the CRG’s satisfaction, the CRG will recommend that the NGB’s certification status be upgraded to Renewal in Good Standing. As with other conditional renewals, the off-cycle recommendation report will remain published alongside the NGB’s other public certification reports until the NGB’s next scheduled certification renewal review.

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## Revision History

Publication Type	Procedure Approver	Publication Date	Next Review	Scheduled	Summary of Changes
Initial Publication	Board of Directors	June 22, 2020	N/A		N/A – initial publication
Procedure Revision	Board of Directors	March 10, 2021	N/A		Revised to include additional details about the exception process, updated section relating to internally managed Paralympic sports, removed references to NGB Audit and Organizational Advancement, and removed language also included in Policy
Procedure Revision	Board of Directors	September 23, 2021	N/A		Re-named NGB Certification Procedure to match new content, added NGB certification application process, updated procedures consistent with changes to the NGB Certification Policy
Procedure Revision	Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer	March 14, 2024.	March 2025		Revised for consistency with revised NGB Certification Policy, including the change to the conditional certification time period.
Procedure Revision	Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer	September [x], 2025	September 2026		Revised to separate the certification renewal process from the initial certification process; revisions for consistency with the updated NGB Certification Policy, including the addition of off-cycle reviews.



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## Appendix A: NGB Audit Schedule, 2025-2028

2025	2026	2027	2028
Lakeshore National Adapted Sport Organization	American Canoe Association	National Wheelchair Basketball Association	USA Baseball
US Equestrian Federation	US Soccer Federation	US Sailing	US Biathlon
USA Basketball	USA Archery	US Ski & Snowboard	USA Bobsled & Skeleton
USA Climbing	USA Artistic Swimming	US Speedskating	US Bowling
USA Diving	USA Karate	US Squash	USA Curling
USA Field Hockey	USA Pentathlon	USRowing	US Figure Skating
USA Gymnastics	USA Rugby	USA Boxing	USA Golf
USA Judo	USA Swimming	USA Cycling	USA Luge
USA Table Tennis	USA Taekwondo	USA Fencing	USA Racquetball
USA Team Handball	USA Track & Field	USA Hockey	USA Roller Sports
USA Water Polo	USA Volleyball	USA Shooting	US Association of Blind Athletes
USA Weightlifting	USA Wrestling	USA Softball	USA Waterski & Wake Sports
		US Tennis Association	
		USA Triathlon	