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ITTF – Umpire

Career development

January 2025

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1. Umpire levels

- Level 1: Basic Umpire
- Level 2: National Umpire
- Level 3: International Umpire White Badge
- Level 4: International Umpire Blue Badge
- Level 5: International Umpire Gold Badge

Member Associations are encouraged to have their own umpire training and qualification programmes for Level 1 and Level 2.

1.1. ITTF Umpire Level 1 (Basic Umpire)

Prerequisites:

- Candidates do not need actual umpire experience but demonstrate interest in table tennis.

Duration of the ITTF Umpire Level 1 education:

- At least 16 hours.

Content of the course:

- ITTF Statutes: Chapter 2

The ITTF Umpire Level 1 Course, which can be taught and tested in any language, must be finalised with **a written examination**.

Candidates who fail the exam have a waiting period of three months before they can apply again for a Level 1 Umpire exam.

Additional information:

Member Associations without a national education programme for umpires can ask ITTF for the **ITTF Umpire Level 1 training programme (on-site training course: 2 days)** for educational and promotional purposes.

A certificate will be issued to successful candidates, and they will be included in the ITTF HPD URC Registry Database.

The hosting MA* has to inform the ITTF by emailing development@ittf.com

The announcement of organizing a self-funded course should be at least 60 days prior to the start of the course, and they should indicate the dates of the course, expert details, and number of participants.

1.2. ITTF Umpire Level 2 (National Umpire)

Prerequisites:

- Candidates need to have the **Umpire Level 1 (Basic Umpire)** or the basic level under the national umpire education process **for at least 1 year** (with similar contents to the ITTF Umpire Level 1).
- **Proven umpiring experience** at least at a provincial or national level.

Content of the ITTF course:

- ITTF Statutes: Chapters 2 and 3
- ITTF Handbook for Match Officials (HMO)
- LARC

The Umpire Level 2 Course, which can be taught and tested in any language, must be finalised with **a written examination, an oral interview, and a practical examination at the table during a match.**

Candidates who fail the exam have a waiting period of six months before they can apply again for a Level 2 Umpire exam.

Additional information:

Member Associations without a national education programme for umpires can ask ITTF for the **ITTF Umpire Level 2 training programme** (on-site training course: 3 days and preferably connected with a tournament) for educational and promotional purposes.

A certificate will be issued to successful candidates, and they will be included in the ITTF HPD URC Registry Database.

The hosting MA* has to inform the ITTF by emailing development@ittf.com

The announcement of organizing a self-funded course should be at least 60 days prior to the start of the course, and they should indicate the dates of the course, expert details, and the estimated number of participants.

1.3. ITTF Umpire Level 3 (International Umpire – White Badge)

Prerequisites:

- **Umpire Level 2 (National Umpire)** or second level under Member Association's own umpire education and qualification programmes for **at least 2 years**.
- **Proven umpiring experience** in **3 national Championships** or 2 international events in the **past 4 years**.
- Competence in English.

Content of the course:

- ITTF Statutes: Chapter 2 and 3
- ITTF Handbook for Match Officials (HMO)
- FAQ
- Workflow Procedures
- LARC

Candidates are requested to attend the online preparatory course to be allowed to take the online exam.

Candidates cannot take an exam more than twice in five years.

1.4. ITTF Umpire Level 4 (Blue Badge Umpire)

Prerequisites:

- **ITTF Umpire Level 3 (International Umpire)** active for **at least 2 years**
- **Proven umpire experience** in at least **2 international events** in the **past 2 years**
- The candidate has to **pass the Blue Badge Interview in English**, either face to face or via a video teleconference application, to demonstrate
 - his/her competency in English
 - the motivation and expectations to become Blue Badge .

This is to prove that the umpire has the required competence to communicate with players and officials during tournaments and wants to become a Blue Badge who is ready to work as an umpire in international competitions.

AUT and Evaluations are only counting if all prerequisites are fulfilled. Evaluations done before will not count. A candidate, who fails the interview on-site during the first event, will also need to re-start the whole AUT process.

The candidate will have a waiting period for at least 6 months to re-start the process.

Blue Badge process:

- **Attending the Advanced Umpires Training course (AUT), which will be online (2 sessions x 3h) and on-site training (1 day)**
- Passing the online **ITTF Advanced Rules Exam (ARE) in English**
- Candidates who fail the ARE can re-take the exam at their next available opportunity, but those who fail twice have a waiting period of six months before they can apply again for the ARE.
- **After passing both AUT and ARE the candidate has to obtain 4 "Meets Expectation" (ME) evaluations** from at least 3 different evaluators in at least 2 different competitions

Additional requirements

- After obtaining the first "Meets Expectations" (ME) the remaining 3 should be obtained within 7 attempts
- No evaluations can be from an evaluator from the umpire's own Association
- The Blue Badge process must be completed within 5 years of attending the first AUT session (or after completion of the AUT) or passing ARE, whichever comes first (for example completed AUT on 10 May 2024 and passed ARE on 12 August 2024, the process must be completed no later than 9 May 2029)
- Candidates not completing the Blue Badge process within the specified time(s), revert to the White Badge status and must restart the complete Blue Badge process
- After having obtained the first "Meets Expectation" (ME) getting a "Does Not Meet" (DNM) (not a "Near Expectations" (NE)) will cancel a previous "Meets Expectation" (ME).

How to maintain the Blue Badge status

Requirements:

- Obtain 3 "Meets Expectation" (ME) evaluations from at least 2 different evaluators in at least 2 different competitions in the last 3 calendar years and/or 3 performance assessments by the referee team with at least 80% of 100 points (a mixture is also possible, e.g. 2 meets expectation and one performance assessment with >80%).
- **After becoming a Blue Badge** any further "Meets Expectation" (ME) will count for the following period of 3 calendar years (for example candidate was qualified on May 31, 2022, the 3-year period will end on December 31, 2025) for maintaining the blue-badge qualification.
- Blue Badge umpires not meeting these requirements by December 31 of any year, will be classified as White Badge umpires.
- Starting from January 2024 getting a "Does Not Meet" (DNM) (not a "Near Expectations" (NE)) will cancel a previous "Meets Expectation" (ME) and two "Near Expectations" (NE) during the 3 year calendar period will cancel one "Meets Expectations" (ME)

A Blue Badge umpire who loses his or her status shall revert to White Badge status and must restart the complete Blue Badge process.

1.5. ITTF Umpire Level 5 (Gold Badge Umpire)

Prerequisites:

- **ITTF Umpire Level 4 (Blue Badge)** active for **at least 2 years**.
- Passing the **ITTF Advanced Rules Exam** again **(in English)**
- **At least 3 performance assessments by the referee team with a total average of all assessments in this period of at least 85% of 100 points in the last 2 years.**
- **Any GB Candidate is expected to get ME in all evaluations during the respective period (2 years). However, in case of any NE evaluation during this period, each will be counted as an assessment with 70 points. In addition, GB candidate is not expected to have any DNM during the respective period. (starting with January 2024)**

A continuing performance assessment system will be in place to train competent ITTF Umpire Level 4 (International Umpire Blue Badge) to enable them to officiate at major ITTF/WTT events.

Assessments are possible for all Blue Badge Umpires also in the period of two years "waiting time as BB". These assessments are counting for the calculation of the average points. BUT becoming Gold Badge is only possible after two years being BB.

How to maintain the Gold Badge status

Requirements:

- Pass the **ITTF Advanced Rules Exam** in English each **third year**.
- Attend the **one-day online ITTF Umpire Training Session** each year to update their knowledge and share their experiences,
- **At least 3 performance assessments** by the referee team **with an average of at least 85% of 100 points in the last 2 years** (average of **all** assessments in the last 2 years)
- At least **one evaluation** (not assessment) **in the previous three calendar years** (starting with 2024)
- **A "Near meets" in an evaluation during the respective period (2 years) is counting as an assessment with 70 points. (starting with January 2024)**
- Officiate in at least **4 international tournaments** in the previous two calendar years
- Available for 2 tournaments and additionally one online meeting each year.
- Mentor Level 2 and Level 3 umpires especially during events but also be available for online discussions and coaching.

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance of umpires' work includes the following steps:

2.1 ITTF Umpires Level 3 (IUs) "active"

To be considered as an active ITTF Umpire Level 3 (IU), they must:

- Officiate in at least **1 international tournament** in the previous 2 calendar years.

An inactive umpire cannot be nominated for international events except WTT Youth Contender events or as "local umpire" in an international event lower than WTT Contender event.

An umpire will be "active" again by working in one of the above mentioned events.

2.2 Evaluation of umpires

The performance of umpires is evaluated during a tournament to educate and develop the match officials.

The evaluator observes the performance of the umpire on the criteria listed in the evaluation form. The evaluator will have debriefings with the umpire during the event and at the end of the tournament if necessary.

2.3 Performance assessment of umpires

Umpires working in Olympic Games, World Championships, WTT Grand Smash, World Cups, WTT Star Contender events are selected based on expected high level of performance. These umpires are assessed during the whole event and the result will be used for future selections. (see "[Performance Assessment Guidelines](#)")

2.4 Extension of deadlines/requirements to keep the status

2.4.1 Parental leave

Umpires have the possibility to extend the required deadlines up to 2 years in case of parental leave. The request has to be forwarded to ITTF URC (urc@ittf.com).

2.4.2 Other exemptions

ITTF URC has the possibility to extend deadlines up to 1 year depending on specific circumstances.

3. Guidelines for umpires' work

Umpires should be consistent in their way of working.

Umpires are encouraged to use the material provided on the [ITTF URC website](#).

4. Information exchange

Umpires are encouraged to take part in the information exchange platform on Facebook group "Table Tennis Umpires and Referees". This forum is used for sharing experiences and defining common standards and best practice.

Furthermore, a [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) document](#) is available, which contains the most frequent questions and the official recommendation from URC.

5. Information about costs and allowances

Courses and exams must be developed and implemented by ITTF and therefore it is necessary to charge a fee for these activities: (starting 01.01.2024)

- International Umpire Exam and online preparatory course: 50 USD
- Advanced Umpire Training (AUT): 50 USD
- Advanced Rules Exam (ARE): 30 USD

The Directives for Match Officials at World Title Competitions and ITTF Sanctioned Events (see: [Documents - International Table Tennis Federation \(ittf.com\)](#)) present the rates for the daily allowances each match official will receive for the work in an event. Additionally, the regulations concerning travel costs and all other provisions for the events are described.