



**The American Swimming
Coaches Association**

2101 North Andrews Avenue, Suite 107
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33311

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Coaches Certification

The Purpose and the Process

Why Be Certified?

Certification means that you are serious about your profession. It means that you care about your continuing coaching education and your professional preparation. It marks you as a coach who is in the mainstream of the coaching profession and willing to be examined in the same light as the great coaches of this country, whether at the collegiate, high school, YMCA or club positions. Employers know that the Certified Coach is committed to professional effort, has professional preparation and professional ethics.

In addition, compensation information and access to professionally evaluated positions are available to Certified Coaches. Certification gives you a title you deserve . . . “Coach John Doe, ASCA Level 3, Age Group.”

Certification also states your credentials precisely and concisely. If you are well educated, but do not yet have the time in service or the opportunity to work with better athletes, it says so. As you gain experience and become successful in actually producing fast swimming with your athletes, it reflects that. This precision is very important and valuable to those who employ swimming coaches . . . and hence, it protects you from unfair comparisons with others who write “creative resumes” to apply for jobs. ASCA Certification provides factual information on you to your potential employer.

How To Be Certified?

There are three steps:

- # 1. Be a member of the American Swimming Coaches Association. Complete a membership application form and mail to ASCA at the above address with payment for annual investment.
- # 2. Complete a Certification Application in full and mail to ASCA at the above address. More information is available on the following pages.
- # 3. Take the required Certification Schools. First, Level 1 - The Foundations of Coaching; next, Level 2 - The Stroke School; continuing with Level 3 - The Physiology School; Level 4 - The Administration School and Level 5 - The Leadership School. Each school is available either at clinics or through home study.

Send the original test(s) to ASCA at the above address. They will be corrected and, if acceptable, will be processed. You will then receive a new membership card with your Certification number, Level and Type. You will also receive feedback on each of your tests and will be notified of the number of units of education added to your permanent Certification Record. If you wish, you may try to “test out” of any requirements.

How To Be Certified?

There are three things analyzed in the Certification process. They are: Education, Experience and Achievement. Your Certification shows that you have met the required standard at each Level. The Five Levels become increasingly difficult. Level 5 is composed of the top 2-5% of coaches in the USA. Level 4 is the top 5-8% and Level 3 is the upper 15% of coaches. Level 2 requires more “units” of education and experience than Level 1.

What Are The Components Of Certification?

Education

Coaching is both an art and a science. Recognizing the above, you will earn units for virtually any education you have taken. You receive many more units for education that relates directly to coaching. Academic education is the first category, and you receive units for your major and/or your advanced degree work. As an example, a major in Exercise Physiology is awarded 40 units for an undergraduate degree, 20 more for a Masters and 20 more for a Ph.D. A major in Egyptian studies will naturally earn fewer units (actually the minimum, which is 10 per degree). List all academic education on your application form.

Clinical education is evaluated similarly. All coaching clinics should be sanctioned by the ASCA. This means that they meet specific criteria in terms of presented topics and use of appropriate speakers. If a clinic you attend is sanctioned, they will advertise “7 ASCA Units Available” or similar verbiage. To receive credit for attending a clinic you must complete the clinic test, and you must send in an “UPDATE FORM” listing the clinic. Clinics other than swimming clinics can also receive credit if you list them on your update form (i.e., a program on “People Skills” put on by your school district).

Education Units and Experience Units must both be present on your Certification Application. They must be in reasonable balance. (You Need BOTH.) Home Study Schools are worth a variety of units from 7 on up. Clinical schools are typically worth 10 units, depending on the instructor. What you learn in your education is the “Tool Kit” of coaching and a vital part of the overall evaluation.

Remember, one or more of the ASCA Certification Schools, either on site or by home study is required. Level 1 - Foundations of Coaching, Level 2 - The Stroke School, Level 3 - The Physiology School, Level 4 - The Administration School, and Level 5 - The Leadership School.

Career developmental coaches now have an opportunity for Level 3 and Level 4 certification. The new categories are called “Level 3 Education and Experience” and “Level 4 Education and Experience” and will appear as such on all certification cards. These categories are designed to recognize the important role that coach (who spends their career in the developmental side of our sport) plays in the overall success of the sport of swimming. This change allows truly developmental coaches the opportunity to attain Level 3 and Level 4 certifications without the required achievement criteria. Level 5 is not included in this opportunity.

There are three key requisites necessary to qualify for Level 3 Education and Experience:

1. You must have been actively coaching for a period of ten full years (120 months), with at least six of those years in a multilevel program where you report to a head coach. This program *is not* intended for Head Coaches.
2. You must have completed the ASCA required schools through Level 3 and have a total of 175 educational units in your certification file.
3. A letter from the Head Coach in support of Level 3 Education and Experience must be enclosed with the application. This letter should ascertain that the coach applying is not in a position where he/she is expected to train athletes to upper levels of performance and is expected to provide foundation coaching.

In order to qualify for Level 4 Education and Experience:

1. The coach must have been actively coaching for fifteen years, with ten years in a developmental position.
2. The coach must have completed all ASCA required schools through Level 5.
3. The coach must have a total of 275 educational units recorded in his/her certification file.
4. The coach must have a letter on file of support from the head coach for Level 4 Education and Experience.

Experience gained at more than one club is acceptable; however, the letter should come from the current head coach for whom you have worked for at least 24 months.



Coaches Certification Application

For Members of the American Swimming Coaches Association

1-800-356-2722 • Fax 954-563-9813 • Phone 954-563-4930

2101 North Andrews Avenue, Suite 107, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311

To Be Certified:

- ⇒ Be an ASCA member (or enclose a membership form).
- ⇒ Fill out this form as completely as possible for us to analyze your full credentials.
- ⇒ Provide copies of appropriate materials to support achievement criteria (i.e., meet results, OVC's).
- ⇒ Send to: Certification ~ ASCA, 2101 North Andrews Avenue, Suite 107, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311
- ⇒ Once this has been reviewed and processed, you will receive your personalized Certificate and Certification Card.

PERSONAL DATA:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Check the following Level for which you are applying: 1 2 3 3 E&E 4 4 E&E 5

Area for which you are applying: USS Age Group High School Junior College

NCAA I NCAA II NCAA III Stroke Coach (Level 3 Only)

EDUCATION:

1. List ALL college degrees (i.e., B.A. History, M.A. Physical Education, etc.)

College Degree: AA BA BS other (please specify) _____

Field of Study _____ School _____ Year _____

Additional Degrees _____ Year _____

List any coaching-related elective courses taken OUTSIDE of a college degree:

Course	School	Credits	QTR or Semester	Year

2. Clinics or ASCA on site certification schools

Clinic / Location	Primary Speaker	No. of Days	Topics

OFFICE
USE
ONLY

Academic
Units

Experience

You must document your coaching experience. You receive unit credit for volunteer or paid coaching and for intern, assistant and head coaching. List all positions and how long you were there. In general, you receive 1 unit per year of assistant or intern coaching and 3 units per year of head coaching. You should also list any teaching experience you have had in addition to the above. When in doubt, list it!

Your Experience allows you to use your coaching “Tool Kit” to maximum advantage and is, therefore, vital to the professional.

Note: Neither education nor experience alone will get you Certified. You need to demonstrate a blend of the two. Level 1 requires a minimum 20 units; Level 2 requires 30 units; Level 3 requires 40 units; Level 4 requires 80 units and Level 5 requires 100 units.

Achievement

In order to be Performance-Certified at Levels 3, 4 or 5, you must have coached an athlete who achieved one of the standards listed under each Level on the Application form. You need only ONE of the achievements listed in order to qualify. You need to submit proof of the achievement. (Copies of official results, OVC cards, Swimming World Rankings, etc.) You also need to submit proof that you are the Primary Coach of the Athlete. (If you are the Head Coach of a team and the team is listed on the proof of time, that is sufficient.)

Now, some definitions. The Coach of Record is that coach who signs the entry sheet to the meet. You must also be the “Primary Coach” of the athlete. The Primary Coach is that person who designs and actively supervises the training of the athlete on a consistent and regular basis. This allows assistant coaches, in certain specific situations, to be the Primary Coach. If you are in this category, we need a letter so stating from your Head Coach. We carefully scrutinize “Primary Coach” applications to protect the integrity of the system, and check all claims by phone calls and personal interviews. Being “Coach of Record” is not enough; you must also qualify as “Primary Coach.” (It is possible to be “Primary Coach” without being “Coach of Record.”)

In general, you must have coached an Age Group athlete for a period of at least six months and a Senior or Collegiate athlete for a period of at least nine consecutive months, prior to claiming that athlete for an achievement. The achievements of your athletes are one measure of the success with which you have used your coaching tool kit.

FINALLY, AS IN ALL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS, WE URGE YOU TO “STATE YOUR CASE” if you think you have an unusual situation that is not fairly represented by the process above.

Achievement Requirements

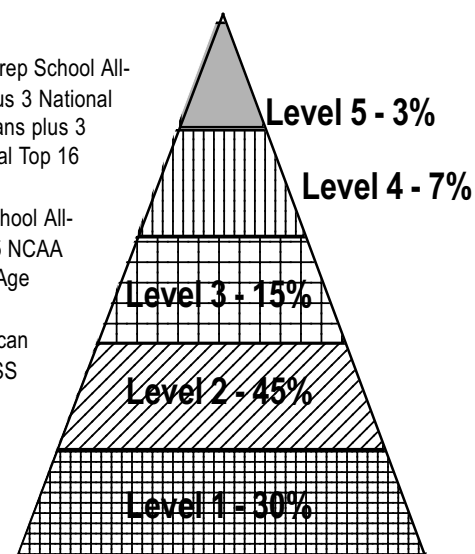
Level 5 (one of) • On USS International Coaches List • 20 High School All-Americans • 20 Prep School All-Americans • 20 YMCA All-Americans plus 3 National Champions • 20 NAIA All-Americans plus 3 National Champions • 20 NCAA II All-Americans plus 3 National Champions • 20 NCAA III All Americans plus 3 National Champions • 40 Individuals with National Top 16 Age Group Rankings plus 3 National Top 16 number one rankings • 5 NCAA I All-Americans

Level 4 (one of) • Individual Senior USS Qualifier or Individual NCAA I Qualifier • 5 High School All-Americans • 5 Prep School All-Americans • 5 YMCA All-Americans • 5 NAIA All-Americans • 5 NCAA II or III All-Americans • 5 Junior College All-Americans • 20 Individuals with National Top 16 Age Group Rankings

Level 3 (one of) • High School All American • NISCA Criteria ** (see below) or Prep All-American • YMCA All-American • Age Group National Top 16 Swimmer • NCAA II or III All-American • USS Junior National Qualifier • Junior College All-American • NAIA All-American • 5 Gold Level Schlueter Stroke Awards

Level 2 • Requires 12 Months Coaching Experience plus the Level 1 and Level 2 Stroke School Coursework

Level 1 • Requires a Minimum of 6 Months Coaching Experience plus the Level 1 Foundations of Coaching Coursework.



American Swimming Coaching Population

75% of the population are within Level 1 and Level 2 Categories.

Levels 3, 4 & 5 performance require Education, Experience and Achievement

****The special NISCA Level 3 Certification Criteria includes:**

- Meet all requirements for Level 2.
- Ten years experience as a high school coach.
- Earned a degree from a four-year institution.
- Demonstrated at least five years service to the community through leadership in a community Learn-To-Swim or other aquatic program.
- Have membership in local, state and national swim coaches associations.

YOU MUST BE THE PRIMARY COACH OF AN ATHLETE WITH ONE OF THESE CRITERIA TO QUALIFY FOR LEVELS 3, 4, AND 5

What Do I Get Once I Am Certified?

You begin the process with your certification application. We analyze that application, tell you what schools you are required to take, if any, and process your application. Once your application and schools are complete, we send you a certificate and a new card with your personal Certification Number. This is valid as long as you are a member of ASCA. You need never apply again for Certification. As you have new educational, experience and achievements to record, you complete the update form and send it to us. We will update your file and send you a new card with your new level or type of coaching.

You will receive a wall certificate suitable for framing. You will also be eligible for the Job Service program to keep in touch with the Job Market and the Position Evaluation process, which allows you to analyze and upgrade your position in the Job Market.

We urge you to constantly update your professional record in your Certification file. It is a great way to document your progress in the profession and it is very useful when it comes time to apply for a new position.

Fees and Related Matters

You pay no fee to be Certified. You do pay for the Education Schools if they are required in your individual case. You do pay for upgrading, new cards, etc., at a minimal level to cover costs.

Continuing Education Required

You must continue to be involved in professional education to maintain your Certification Level. The requirement is a total of 50 units earned in every three-year period. With this in mind, be consistent in updating your files. Failure to remain active in professional education may result in a loss of Certification Level according to a predetermined formula.

What Is The Process Of Upgrading/Updating?

One of the things that you will want to do on a regular basis is update by adding your continuing education and experiences. Hopefully, you will also be UPGRADING from Level to Level as you progress in your career. Making these events happen is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**. You can request an upgrade/update form by calling us at 1-800-356-2722. Complete that form and mail it to us to complete the process. When you attend a clinic and take a test, follow the same process.

“The ASCA Certification Program has a certain amount of flexibility built into it.

If you feel that this form does not effectively represent a certain part of your

Coaching Credentials, we invite you to send an accompanying letter and ‘state your case.’

We’re happy to work with you for an accurate representation of your professional development.”

- John Leonard, Executive Director, ASCA

ASCA Coaches Certification In Cooperation With:

- COLLEGE SWIM COACHES ASSOCIATION • NISCA • YMCA
- UNITED STATES SWIMMING • MASTERS COACHES ASSOCIATION
- WORLD SWIMMING COACHES ASSOCIATION

For additional information on MASTERS CERTIFICATION, including application, contact the American Swimming Coaches Association:

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