

Guide to Institute of Swimming Approved Centres and Negotiated Course Costs

Background

The Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) is the National Governing Body for diving, open water swimming, swimming, synchronised swimming and water polo in England. All ASA qualifications are recognised throughout Great Britain and in many other countries. The ASA is the major training organisation for teachers and coaches for the aquatic disciplines.

In order to comply with national education and training standards the ASA has developed two separate and independent organisations – the ASA Awarding Body (AB) and the Institute of Swimming (IoS) which is the delivery body for all ASA qualifications.

The AB develops, assesses, awards and quality assures all ASA qualifications. Many of these are recognised by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) as being of an appropriate standard and quality in order to attract public funding.

By falling in line with the QCA, which regulates and develops educational qualifications and UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) requirements, ASA qualifications are acknowledged outside of sport as part of a National Qualifications Framework. It is a major step towards swimming coaching and teaching being recognised as a serious career choice with a designated pathway.

The AB is the equivalent of other awarding bodies such as City & Guilds and OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations). The AB is licensed by British Swimming to award UKCC qualifications in England and Wales. It also has the remit for quality assurance of all areas of UKCC standards.

Approved Centres

The AB currently has a responsibility to register Approved Centres to deliver its qualifications. Each Approved Centre currently pays registration fees of £1000 PA for one registered facility plus £250 PA for all additional registered facilities. This fee covers the costs of the initial approval process and on-going support to the centre to meet the new UKCC criteria. The IoS is an Approved Centre in its own right with over 100 facilities within its network, all registered with the Awarding Body.

From January 2008 all facilities must be registered to be able to deliver ASA courses. Facilities can choose to register with the Awarding Body directly or as part of the Institute of Swimming (see Appendix 1 – diagram to show how the IoS fits into the Approved Centre network).

UK Coaching Framework

The sports coach UK Coaching Framework is part of a massive overhaul of teacher and coach education across sports in Britain. Swimming is working closely with sports coach UK to develop a framework to recruit and support current and potential coaches to create a sporting legacy that goes beyond the 2012 Games. Key to this achievement is the provision of high quality sporting opportunities for children, players and athletes at all stages of their development.

One aspect of the Coaching Framework is ensuring the standardisation of qualifications across all sports. Courses meeting the UKCC standard are structured and resourced in a completely different way to the previous ASA courses. There are far more comprehensive Quality Assurance mechanisms involved in assessing each candidate. Each course has resources, which are constantly being reviewed and updated for the tutors to deliver and therefore enhance the learning experience.

Approved Centres delivering UKCC accredited qualifications need to ensure that training resources meet minimum criteria; there is on-going training for their tutors; incorporated internal verification processes and appropriate advice and guidance given to all candidates. The ASA Awarding Body has a monitoring and evaluation function for all Approved Centres, ensuring they meet the minimum criteria laid down.

The ASA is fully committed to “raising the bar” and feels that the UKCC will benefit the participants and the sport.

Candidate costs

There is a standard ASA Awarding Body registration fee, which is £50 per candidate for Level 1, £75 for Level 2 and £100 for Level 3.

IoS Course Fees

The following can be used for all sites working within the IoS Approved Centre. This includes facility operators and swimming clubs.

Currently the IoS has calculated the cost of qualifications at £370 per Level 1, £650 per Level 2 and £1800 for Level 3. This takes into consideration the central fixed costs to support delivery of the course (such as the Awarding Body fee) and the development aspects of other aquatic elements in the UK Coaching Framework, as well as the estimated costs associated with the site-specific elements.

In broader commercial terms this could be seen as the Recommended Retail Price (RRP). This is the market value of the qualification, however, flexible

pricing is possible through external funding and reductions in some of the site-specific costs, so courses can be offered to candidates at a discounted rate.

The principle of flexible pricing is based around the rationale of fixed and variable pricing. It has been identified that variability of cost can be achieved through reduced priced facility hire, using existing water time already purchased by the club (with the approval of the facility operator) and through tutor fees, as some clubs have tutors who are willing to work for free or a reduced fee.

The IoS has to ensure that each qualification delivered generates a contribution to the fixed costs. If during negotiations lower variable costs can be achieved then these can be passed onto the candidate.

Working with Clubs and Swim Schools

In order to expand the partners the IoS can work with to deliver coach and teacher education it has been agreed to extend negotiations to include Swimming Clubs and Swim Schools. It is felt that working directly with clubs to deliver coaching qualifications will allow easier course organisation. In order to work with clubs and swim schools the following requisites must exist.

- ASA Swim School, Swim 21 Club or actively working towards Swim 21
- Permission to use school or club water time from the pool operator
- Nominated course organiser advised to IoS
- Signed agreement between School/Club and the IoS in place
- IoS to receive free pool time

If you require further information on becoming an independent Approved Centre, please email approvedcentres@swimming.org or call Frances Gibbs on 01509 615445.

If you require further information on becoming part of the IoS network please email Sam Stark on sam.stark@swimming.org

Appendix 1
Diagram to show how the IoS fits into the Approved Centre network

