

Athlete Categorisation Standards and Process

Paralympic Cycling Disciplines



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Version 1 | August 2025

1. Purpose

Athlete Categorisation is used to identify, track, and prioritise athletes at each stage of the Performance Pathway, developing a pipeline of athletes to support Australian Cycling Teams in consistently winning medals at major international events: namely Olympic, Paralympic, World Championships and Commonwealth Games. The AusCycling athlete categorisation and standard process for Para-cycling disciplines is aligned with the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) National Athlete Categorisation Framework (NACF). The ASC has reviewed and approved this process.

1.1 How categorisation is implemented

AusCycling Performance has implemented a NACF driven by the ASC. Categorisation is the process by which National Sport Organisations (NSOs) identify, track, and prioritise athletes in Olympic and Paralympic disciplines.

At AusCycling Performance, categorisation is based on two sport specific measures:

1. Sport specific evidence-based metrics to assess the athlete's current performance combined with a combination of objective and subjective assessments of the athlete's headroom*.
2. Performance trends are included in the assessment for athletes considered for Podium Ready and Podium categories.

When we combine these two factors, it provides an indication of the potential and podium trajectory each athlete is on. Our talent identification and development systems work in unison with the AusCycling Performance Strategy.

**Headroom refers to the support, resources, and education that an athlete has had access to which has contributed to their development to date; and their potential to improve performances in the future.*

1.2 How the National Athlete Categorisation Framework is designed

All Australian NSO's use the ASC National Performance Pathway Categorisation table (over page) to define a Sport Specific Framework. At AusCycling, we categorise athletes through four stages, from Developing on route to Paralympic, Commonwealth Games and World Championship podium performances. The AusCycling "What it takes to win" (WITTW) guidelines, and AusCycling Athlete Roadmaps (ADF), (currently under development as of publication of this document – expected publication Q4/2025) are considered in the establishment of standards across all disciplines within this framework.

The athlete journey is viewed as progressing upwards, with the only allowance for downward movement being between Podium and Podium Ready categorisations.

- Extenuating circumstances for downward movement of categorisation may be considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Director of Pathways and Executive General Manager – Performance, for submission to the ASC (refer clause 3.2).



Table 1 - ASC National Performance Pathway Categorisation Framework

National Athlete Categorisation Framework (NACF)

The National Athlete Categorisation Framework (NACF) provides a generic guide for NSOs to establish sport specific criteria to categorise individual athletes at differing stages of the performance pathway. Generally, athletes will be identified as:

Performance Pathway Athletes

CURRENT CYCLE ATHLETES			FUTURE CYCLE ATHLETES	
PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES	PODIUM: Performance Confirmation Medaled at pinnacle event or has been the World #1 or medaled at a World Championship event (in current cycle pinnacle event/discipline) in the past 24 months and demonstrates a trajectory capable of winning a medal at current cycle pinnacle event aligned to the WITTW as referenced in the NSO athlete performance matrix.	PODIUM READY: Performance Ready Displays performance capability aligned with WITTW, demonstrating a trajectory capable of winning a medal at current cycle pinnacle event as referenced in the NSO athlete performance matrix.	PODIUM POTENTIAL: Performance Potential Displays performance capability to qualify and compete in current cycle pinnacle event, contributing to inspiration and wellbeing outcomes AND performance capability is aligned to WITTW demonstrating a trajectory capable of podium performance as referenced in the NSO athlete performance matrix.	<div> DEVELOPING: Athlete Development Verification Displays performance potential aligned with WITTW and demonstrates a trajectory capable of contributing to future (next) cycle outcomes as referenced in the NSO athlete performance matrix. </div> <div> EMERGING: Athlete Development Confirmation Displays performance progression informed by the sport specific athlete development framework as it relates to WITTW for future cycle outcomes as referenced in the NSO athlete performance matrix. </div>

** Meeting the criteria of the NACF and being identified through an NSO Athlete Categorisation Performance Matrix does not guarantee access to services or support from the NIN. The use of these tools enables the prioritisation of support to the right athletes at the right time. As a general guide, resource and service prioritisation will be given to Podium, Podium Ready, Podium Potential, Developing and Emerging athletes respectively.*

Other Recognised Athletes

CURRENT CYCLE ATHLETES	
RECOGNITION CATEGORY	REPRESENTATIVE: Pinnacle Event Selection Athletes identified as having the potential to be selected to represent Australia at the current cycle Olympic Games, Paralympic Games or Commonwealth Games who will contribute to HP2032+ Strategy outcomes of wellbeing and inspiration.

** Some sports may choose to recognise athletes in a Representative category. The NIN will target and prioritise Podium, Podium Ready, Podium Potential, Developing and Emerging athletes respectively. Any support from the NIN will be dependent on available resources and agreement with NSO's, after having targeted the Performance Pathway athletes identified in the NACF.*

Building on this framework, the AusCycling Performance Team has designed its own cycling specific processes and standards related to Paralympic events, for Para-cycling (Road and Track) disciplines; including graduation steps from one category to another, which are within the cycling specific appendices of this document.

NSO's also have the option to recognise athletes who have been identified as having the potential to be selected to represent Australia for the current cycle Pinnacle Event as Representative Athletes. The AusCycling Categorisation Panel, using its discretion, may identify athletes for Representative categorisation who contribute to Podium or Podium Ready performances, particularly in, but not restricted to, team events and/or qualification towards the Paralympic Games. (Refer Appendix 2)

1.3 How is the Categorisation Framework reviewed and updated?

The Framework Performance Standards (refer Appendices) are reviewed on an annual basis. The review is the responsibility of the Director of Pathways who will consult with the Head Coach- Para-cycling, a discipline specific representative from the HPN; and a representative from the ASC.



2. What do we include in our cycling specific Athlete Categorisation process

2.1 Current Performance

1. Current performance is based on competition performances first, and objective approved additional factors identified for consideration second (refer Appendices). The **performance time period** considered by the panel is:
 - For Podium level categorisation, results from the previous 24 months may be considered.
 - All other categorisation levels: results from the previous 12 months may be considered.
2. For each cycling discipline, National Categorisation Standards are published and can be found in the appendices of this document..
3. The scores for timed events are calculated and set based on retrospective data of athletes from the past two Paralympic cycles.
4. In a Paralympic year, the Benchmark Event will be referred to as the Pinnacle event. By exception, an alternative Benchmark Event (i.e. World Championships) may be considered in a Pinnacle event year for approval, however performances at the alternative Benchmark Event will be compared to those at the Pinnacle event.
5. Commonwealth Games results in Paralympic events may be considered in the year a Commonwealth Games is approved as a Benchmark Event by the ASC.
6. If an athlete is in a team event for a Benchmark Event and they compete in a preliminary heat, but not the final, they will receive the same categorisation outcome as those athletes who competed in the final.
7. If an athlete is a travelling reserve in a team event for a Benchmark Event and does not compete in any team event rounds, their categorisation will be subject to meeting the identified criteria in the framework

2.2 Headroom

Athlete headroom refers to the estimated and realistic "room for improvement" potentially achievable through means such as additional training, service provision, developmental trends, experience etc. Factors taken into consideration include:

1. Age and experience related factors.
2. Training and race factors.
3. Technological factors.
4. Service provision factors.
5. Factored events and advice from classification experts.

The Athlete Categorisation Panel will consider the following headroom factors in the categorisation process:

1. Training age and time in sport are considered in the headroom discussion. We consider the duration of which the athlete has been involved in both:
 - a. Cycling training in general.
 - b. The specific cycling discipline for which the categorisation submission has been made.
2. Training and race factors include:
 - a. The total accumulated race days for the year.
 - b. The level of racing the athlete has participated in.
 - c. The overall training volume that the athlete has been exposed to.
 - d. Subjective assessment of athlete performance and behaviours in the daily training and competition environments.



3. Technological factors that can have a large impact on performance in cycling disciplines are:
 - a. Type of bike.
 - b. Type of wheels that the athlete used whilst racing.
 - c. Types of clothing and related technology.
 - d. Access to aerodynamic measurement and expertise.
4. The types of specialist support the athlete has had to access to, including:
 - e. Coaching.
 - f. Strength and conditioning coaching.
 - g. Nutritionist services.
 - h. Mental performance coaches.
 - i. Exercise physiologists.
 - j. Physiotherapists.
 - k. Medical.
5. Factored events at the Paralympic Games will be considered in assessing athlete trajectories. Athlete performances will be assessed (where relevant) using the UCI standard performance factors.

3. Categorisation submission process

1. Athlete categorisations must be submitted to AusCycling Performance by a High-Performance Network (HPN) Coach (State Institute using the approved AusCycling Performance categorisation data submission sheet.
2. Athletes (or their coaches) who are not part of a High-Performance Network or National program must contact their State Institute Coach to enquire about their categorisation eligibility and the application process (<https://auscycling.org.au/about/high-performance/categorisation>).
3. For timed events, submissions will only be accepted by the **HPN Coach if the athlete has met the performance standards for their discipline**, as referenced in the discipline specific Appendices.
4. Before contacting a HPN Coach, athletes and coaches are to refer to the performance standards provided in the Appendices of this document. HPN coaches will only consider nominating athletes for categorisation who can clearly demonstrate the performance standards have been met.

3.1 Athlete Categorisation Panel Role

1. The Athlete Categorisation Panel will be chaired by the Director of Pathways or the Executive General Manager - Performance, or by an alternative person nominated by Director of Pathways
2. The Panel will consist of the following members:



Podium Potential – Podium Panel Membership

Panel Member	Voting Rights	Position
Chair (Panel Member)	Voting Member	Director of Pathways, AusCycling
Panel Member	Voting Member	Executive General Manager – Performance, AusCycling
Panel Member	Voting Member	Head Coach Para-cycling, AusCycling
Observer (Optional)	Non-voting Member	Athlete Transition and Lifestyle Manager, AusCycling
Observer (Optional)	Non-voting Member	High Performance Network Coach
Observer	Non-voting Members	Australian Sports Commission
Observer (Optional)	Non-voting Members	Paralympics Australia
Observer (Optional)	Non-voting Member	Classification Specialist, Paralympics Australia

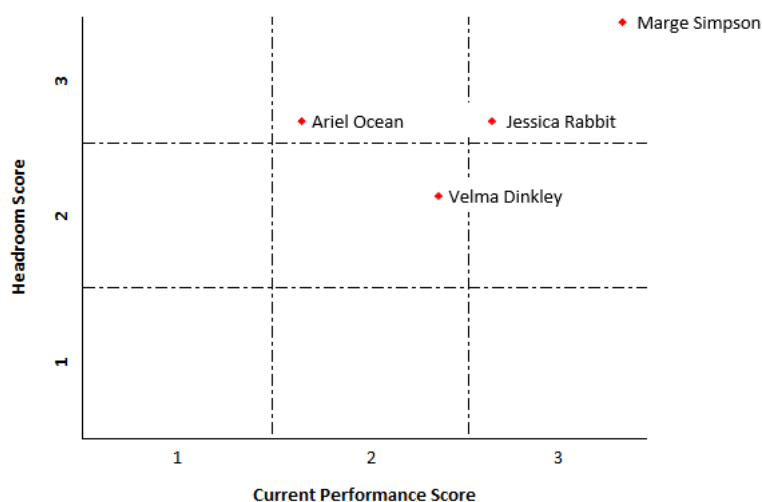
Developing Panel Membership

Panel Member	Voting Rights	Position
Chair (Panel Member)	Voting Member	Director of Pathways, AusCycling
Panel Member	Voting Member	Head Coach Para-cycling
Panel Member	Voting Member	High Performance Network Head Coach
Panel Member	Non-voting member	High Performance Network Para Coach (Road) High Performance Network Para Coach (Track)
Observer	Non-voting Members	Australian Sports Commission
Observer (Optional)	Non-voting Members	Paralympics Australia
Observer (Optional)	Non-voting Member	Classification Specialist, Paralympics Australia

- Observers may be present on every panel.
- Voting Panel Members (for each discipline) are responsible for considering athletes for categorisation in accordance with these categorisation standards. For Developing athletes only, Panel Members will independently score athletes in line with the Categorisation Matrix at Table 2.
- Voting Panel Members will consider and vote on athlete categorisation in good faith, without bias and otherwise in accordance with these categorisation standards. If the Panel cannot agree, the Chair (and/or representative) will have the final categorisation decision.
- Based on the assessment, and at the discretion of the Categorisation Panel, available spots might be deliberately left open where there is consensus that there aren't enough athletes deemed to have shown the potential for future medal performances at Benchmark Events (BME).



Table 2. Categorisation Matrix (Developing only)



3.2 Extenuating Circumstances

Extenuating circumstances means an inability to compete, attend training camps or perform at an optimum level arising from:

- Medical conditions, injury or illness;
- Classification changes;
- Availability of Pilots and/or Stokers (must provide evidence of person, availability, and performance level);
- Agreed dual sport commitments;
- Travel delays;
- Equipment failure;
- Bereavement or personal misfortune;
- A direction from the Head Coach Para-cycling that the athlete does not compete at or attend one or more training camps or events to ensure optimal management of the athlete's overall competition load, where such direction is approved by the Director of Pathways; and/or
- Any other factors reasonably considered by the Director of Pathways to constitute extenuating circumstances

All extenuating circumstances correspondence must be submitted to the Director of Pathways by the athlete and/or coach in writing 14-days prior to the panel meeting. The Director of Pathways will notify the athlete and/or coach within 48-hours if the extenuating circumstances are approved to be considered by the Categorisation Panel.

The athlete and/or coach must then submit to the Director of Pathways 7-days prior to the categorisation panel meeting:

- An Individual Athlete Performance Plan; and/or
- Return to Sport Plan; and/or
- Supporting medical documentation from a suitably qualified sports doctor or medical practitioner that substantiates the request (mandatory for Medical conditions, injury or illness).

A decision in each case of advised, possible extenuating circumstances may be made by the Director of Pathways on an individual basis. The Director of Pathways is not obliged to consider any notification by an athlete under this clause 3.2. There is no appeal against any decision made in respect of extenuating circumstances.



3.3 Appeals

The Athlete Categorisation and Standards process identifies, tracks, and prioritises athletes at each stage of the Performance Journey. Athlete Categorisation will be used to determine an athlete's NACF level, as well as to inform planning and to prioritise support.

Categorisation does not contribute to and cannot be used for AusCycling's athlete selection or nomination processes for National Team representation.

All decisions made by the AusCycling Athlete Categorisation Panel are final. **No appeals process is available.**

3.4 Athlete Transition

AusCycling has developed principles and processes for recognising athletes who are identified as contributing to the performance outcomes of the sport at the next pinnacle event where one of the following may apply:

- a. An athlete is recovering from a major injury or illness;
- b. An athlete is taking time away from competition;
- c. An athlete is transitioning into a sport from another;
- d. An athlete is pregnant; or
- e. An athlete is retiring from sport, or their categorisation is not continuing.

Refer to AusCycling dAIS and Transition Support Guidelines located at: <https://auscycling.org.au/about/high-performance/categorisation>

4. Monitoring of categorised athletes

Key processes that need to be upheld for categorisation to take place or be maintained are:

1. **Monitoring.** Categorised athletes and their coaches must use the national performance tracking platform, **Training Peaks**. It will be a requirement of Categorisation for athletes and their coaches to use this platform as part of a national monitoring and training prescription system.

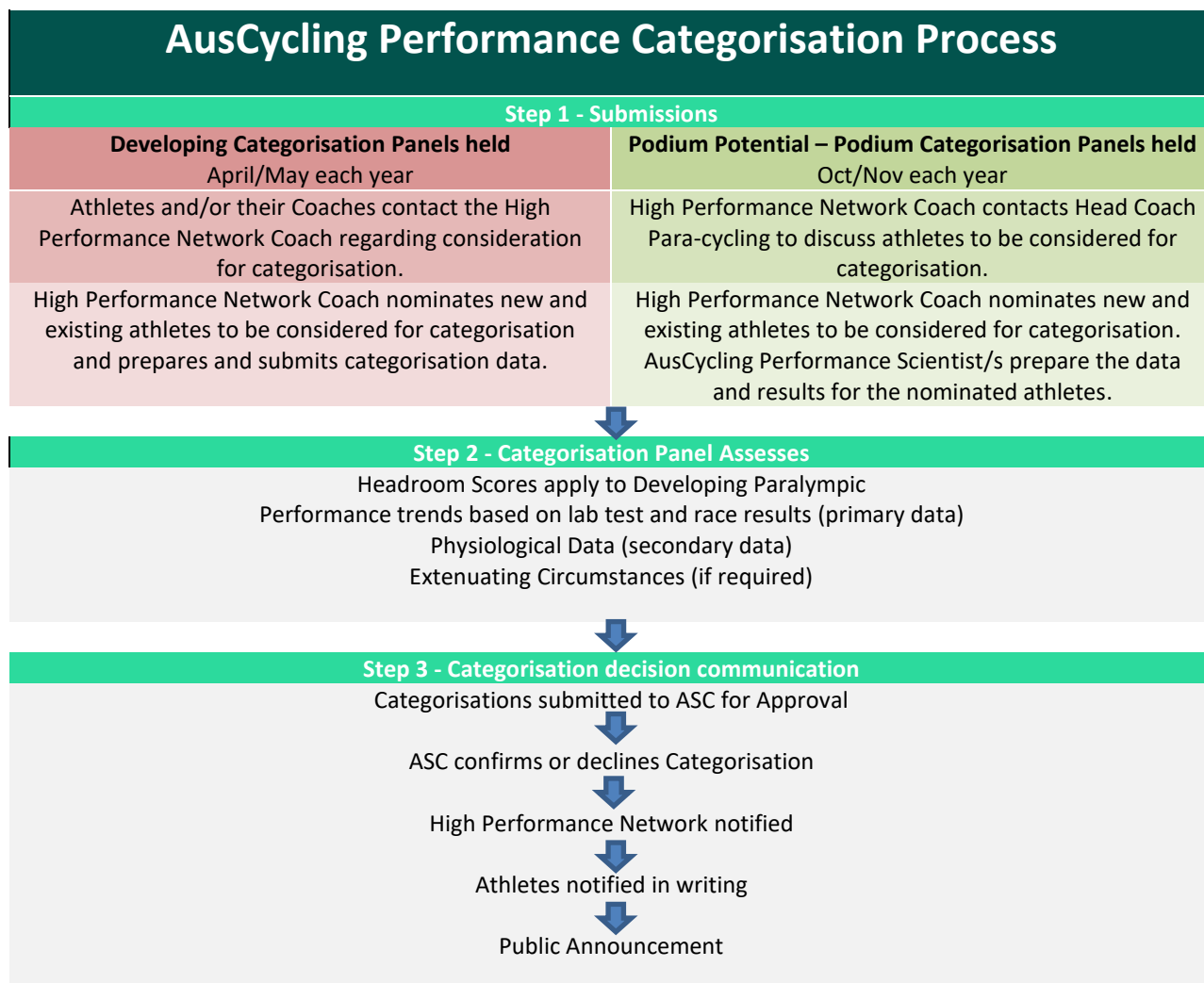
5. Roles, responsibilities, and timelines

The timing roles and responsibilities for those involved in the categorisation process are outlined in the table below.

Roles	Responsibilities	
HPN Coaches	Providing information that aligns with the categorisation criteria	Submit application via datasheet
Panel Members	Assessors and Selectors	Assessing applications Granting and dismissing categorisation applications Transitions (AW&E)
AusCycling	Govern the sport, inclusive of High-Performance Programs which include categorised athletes	Set and publish categorisation process Appoint Panel members Communicate with the ASC Communicate with Athletes, Coaches and SIS/SAS



In summary, the below flowchart depicts the sequence of events in the categorisation process:



6. Amendments to Categorisation and Performance Standards

AusCycling may amend the secondary and physiological standards of this Categorisation and Performance Standards Process to represent current performance levels. Amendments generally take place after the finalisation of Benchmark Events. For Podium levels, Benchmark Events will be communicated on the AusCycling Categorisation website by the end of Q1 each year.

Amendments will be communicated:

- on the AusCycling Categorisation website [<https://auscycling.org.au/about/high-performance/categorisation>]
- By email to:
 - a) all current categorised athletes
 - b) AusCycling Performance and Pathway Staff
 - c) AusCycling Development Academy Leads
 - d) AusCycling State Operations Managers
 - e) High Performance Network Coaches
 - f) SIS/SAS Para Units



Appendix 1: Paralympic Disciplines

Para-Cycling Road						
<p>The purpose of this document is to aid in athlete categorisation. It is a guide only.</p> <p><u>Competition Performances in Paralympic events only will be considered and given precedence over additional factors identified for consideration.</u></p>						
Categorisation Level	Competition Performances					
PODIUM	<p>Medal result at BME in previous 24 months AND deemed capable of a medal result at the next Paralympic Games.</p> <p>Athletes must have a confirmed or under review international classification status.</p>					
PODIUM READY	<p>4th-6th at most recent BME, AND are deemed capable to progress to PODIUM level, targeting a medal at the next Paralympic Games.</p> <p>Athletes must have a confirmed or under review international classification status.</p>					
PODIUM POTENTIAL	<p>Competition Performances</p> <p>Consideration against the following performance times in a UCI event.</p> <p>Athletes must have a Confirmed or Under Review international classification status</p>	<p>Additional Factors for Consideration</p> <p>The following performance times are example estimates of the Podium Potential standard.</p>				
		Men			Women	
		Class	Av Distance (km)	Flat Course Av Speed (km/h)	Class	Av Distance (km)
						Flat Course Av Speed (km/h)
		MB	28	45.7	WB	25
		MC5	25	43.7	WC5	20
		MC4	25	40.67	WC4	20
		MC3	25	40.22	WC3	18
		MC2	20	38.8	WC2	18
		MC1	20	37.1	WC1	18
		MH5	19	38.8	WH5	17
		MH4	18	38.8	WH4	17
		MH3	18	37.1	WH3	17
		MH2	17	32.3	WH2	15
		MH1	14	23.6	WH1	15
		MT2	15	32.4	WT2	15
		MT1	12	28.1	WT1	12



DEVELOPING	<p>Athletes who achieve Podium Potential standards at an AusCycling recognised competition may be categorised at Developing at the discretion of the Panel.</p> <p>Athletes must have a confirmed or under review national classification status.</p>
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Para-Cycling Track						
The purpose of this document is to aid in athlete categorisation. It is a guide only. <u>Competition Performances in Paralympic events only will be considered and given precedence over additional factors identified for consideration.</u>						
Categorisation Level		Competition Performances				
PODIUM		Medal result at BME in previous 24 months AND deemed capable of a medal result at the next Paralympic Games. Athletes must have a confirmed or under review international classification status.				
PODIUM READY		4th-6th at most recent BME, AND are deemed capable to progress to PODIUM level, targeting a medal at the next Paralympic Games. Athletes must have a confirmed or under review international classification status.				
PODIUM POTENTIAL		Competition Performances Consideration against the following performance times in a UCI event (ie. Oceania’s). Competition performances at Scratch and Elimination events will be considered in the context of depth and standard of field. Athletes must have a Confirmed or Under Review international classification status	Additional Factors for Consideration The following performance times are example estimates of the Podium Potential standard.			
			Men		Women	
			Class	Kilo Time (s)	Class	Kilo Time (s)
			MB	01:04.5	WB	01:12.2
			MC5	01:08.3	WC5	39.7 (500m)
			MC4	01:11.3	WC4	41.2 (500m)
			MC3	01:12.6	WC3	43.9 (500m)
			MC2	01:17.3	WC2	47.0 (500m)
			MC1	01:20.7	WC1	46.2 (500m)
			Class	IP	Class	IP
MB	4:07.3 (4km)	WB	4:15.7 (4km)			
				All times must be environmentally corrected as per the AusCycling Trial Recording and Environmental Standards Protocols June 2024		
DEVELOPING		Athletes who achieve Podium Potential standards at an AusCycling recognised competition may be categorised at Developing at the discretion of the Panel. Athletes must have a confirmed or under review national classification status.				



Appendix 2: Representative Category

Athlete Category	COMPETITION PERFORMANCES
REPRESENTATIVE	<p>The category of Representative may be given to an elite para-cycling athlete who contributes to a Podium or Podium Ready performance at the most recent approved BME OR achieves, an inspirational performance at an international competition in a Paralympic cycling sport OR assists with Paralympic Games qualification strategy (ie. Quotas).</p> <p>Athletes who are categorised as Representative are not eligible to access dAIS funding.</p>

Version Control

Date	Update
August 2025	AC Para Athlete Categorisation and Performance Standards approved by AIS and PA
27 August 2025	Appendix 1: "Under Review" added to Podium Ready and Podium International classification status